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CRITICAL AND HISTORICAL ESSAYS

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CRITICAL AND HISTORICAL ESSAYS

CONTRIBUTED TO THE *EDINBURGH REVIEW*

BY

LORD MACAULAY

EDITED
WITH INTRODUCTION, NOTES AND INDEX
BY
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IN THREE VOLUMES
VOL. I.

METHUEN & CO.
36 ESSEX STREET W.C.
LONDON
1903

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PREFACE

THE author of these Essays is so sensible of their defects that he has repeatedly refused to let them appear in a form which might seem to indicate that he thought them worthy of a permanent place in English literature. Nor would he now give his consent to the republication of pieces so imperfect, if, by withholding his consent, he could make republication impossible. But, as they have been reprinted more than once in the United States, as many American copies have been imported into this country, and as a still larger importation is expected, he conceives that he cannot, in justice to the publishers of the Edinburgh Review, longer object to a measure which they consider as necessary to the protection of their rights, and that he cannot be accused of presumption for wishing that his writings, if they are read, may be read in an edition freed at least from errors of the press and from slips of the pen.

This volume contains the Reviews which have been reprinted in the United States, with a very few exceptions, which the most partial reader will not regret. The author has been strongly urged to insert three papers on the Utilitarian Philosophy, which, when they first appeared, attracted some notice, but which are not in the American editions. He has, however, determined to omit these papers, not because he is disposed to retract a single doctrine which they contain; but because he is unwilling to offer what might be regarded as an affront to the memory of one from whose opinions he still widely dissents, but to whose talents and virtues he admits that he formerly did not do justice. Serious as are the faults of the Essay on Government, a critic, while noticing those faults, should have abstained from using contemptuous language respecting the historian of British India. It ought to be known that Mr. Mill had the generosity, not only to forgive, but to forget the unbecoming acrimony with which he had been assailed, and was, when his valuable life closed, on terms of cordial friendship with his assailant.

No attempt has been made to remodel any of the pieces which are contained in this volume. Even the criticism on Milton, which was written when the author was fresh from college, and which contains scarcely a paragraph such as his matured judgment approves, still remains overloaded with gaudy and ungraceful ornament. The blemishes which have been removed were, for the most part, blemishes caused by unavoidable haste. The author has sometimes, like other contributors to periodical works, been under the necessity of writing at a distance from all books and from all advisers; of trusting to his memory for facts, dates, and quotations; and of sending manuscripts to the post without reading them over. What he has composed thus rapidly has often been as rapidly printed. His object has been that every Essay should now appear as it probably would have appeared when it was first published, if he had then been allowed an additional day or two to revise the proof-sheets, with the assistance of a good library.

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EDITOR'S PREFACE

IT would not be easy to edit Macaulay's *Essays* to the general satisfaction. Such is Macaulay's range of allusion that a full commentary would far outrun the length of the text. But nothing could be more unjust to the *Essays* than to bury them under a mass of dull explanation. They are works of literature rather than of science, and the pleasure of reading them should not be converted into a task. Few books have a public so wide, or differing so much in degrees of literary and historical knowledge. Information which a man engaged in active pursuits would accept from a commentator without offence, if without gratitude, may seem impertinent and ridiculous to a man who leads a life of study. The highest ambition of an editor should be to pass unnoticed. But an editor of these *Essays* gives too many openings for censure to be warranted in such an expectation.

What it seemed advisable to say about Macaulay's habits of thought and expression, and his place among historians and men of letters has been said once for all in the general Introduction. What the editor regards as the chief characteristics of each essay, its excellences and defects, have been suggested in the prefatory Note. Whilst endeavouring to give such corrections or explanations of particular statements as seemed unavoidable, the editor has refrained from rewriting the *Essays* under the pretext of commenting upon them. He has not thought it his duty to repeat incessantly that the modern conception of history differs in several respects from Macaulay's, that Macaulay was a staunch party man, or that Macaulay often used strong and emphatic language. It is a kind of bad manners to be for ever harping on the faults of a great writer, to be always interjecting that a luminous description is not precise in every detail, or that a fine burst of rhetoric betrays excessive warmth of feeling. A commentator spends his time and pains but ill in lessening the admiration felt for any work of real excellence, however real may also be its imperfections.

The editor has much pleasure in acknowledging a heavy debt of gratitude to that monumental work, the *Dictionary of National Biography*. He wishes also to return his best thanks to several friends who have helped him in tracing some of Macaulay's more recondite allusions, especially to his colleague Professor Ker, to Dr. Firth whose knowledge of English history and literature is only equalled by the generosity with which it is put at the disposal of others, and to Mr. Holden, the learned assistant librarian of All Souls College, Oxford. He has also to return thanks for assistance afforded in the columns of *Notes and Queries*. For all oversights and mistakes the editor is, it need scarcely be said, responsible.

F. C. MONTAGUE.

INTRODUCTION

THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY was born on the 25th of October, 1800, at Rothley Temple, in Leicestershire. His father, Zachary Macaulay, the son of a Scotch minister, had begun life as an overseer on a plantation in Jamaica, but learnt there so deep an abhorrence of slavery that he threw up his employment and became one of the most zealous apostles of emancipation. A puritan and eminent in the group of Low Churchmen sometimes styled, almost in ridicule, the Clapham sect, Zachary was not free from the narrowness which is too often found in high and earnest natures. Although an intelligent and cultivated man, he cared little for literature and less for society. If the taste for letters be hereditary, it came to Macaulay rather from his mother than from his father. Mrs. Macaulay was the daughter of a Quaker bookseller in Bristol named Mills. She had been a favourite pupil and always remained the friend of Hannah More. We are accustomed to regard that age as one of female ignorance, yet it may be doubted whether the proportion of really well-read women was so much smaller than now. Mrs. Macaulay at all events read a great deal, preferring a book that interested her to any company however distinguished or agreeable. Little Macaulay profited betimes by her example. "From the time that he was three years old he read incessantly, for the most part lying on the rug before the fire with his book on the ground and a piece of bread and butter in his hand." For toys he cared little, and he seems hardly to have played with other children. But he liked walking with his mother or nurse while he repeated what he had been reading or told stories of his own invention. Then the creative impulse began to stir in his breast. When seven years old he bravely undertook to write an abridgment of universal history. "Marmion" and

"The Lay of the Last Minstrel" set him upon a poem which he called "The Battle of Cheviot." Next he essayed an epic, "Olaus the Great; or, The Conquest of Mona," with episodes leading up to prophecies of the future fortunes of his own family. Sir George Trevelyan tells us that the manuscripts which have been preserved from these years of childhood are not only correct in spelling and in grammar, but display the same lucidity of meaning and scrupulous accuracy in punctuation and other details of the literary art which distinguish his mature writings.

To such a child it was of little consequence how much formal teaching he received. The books and sympathy which he found at home sufficed for his earliest education. Young Macaulay went first to a private school at Clapham kept by a Mr. Greaves, and afterwards to a Mr. Preston's school at Little Shelford, near Cambridge. As athletic exercises had not then become the tyranny which they now are, he was allowed to remain sedentary and studious. It is remarkable that, with fair health and more than common sensibility, he never showed any taste for the country or found much pleasure in rural landscape. "London is the place for me," he wrote in his fifteenth year. Study at all events did not dry up the springs of natural affection. He was always fondly attached to father and mother, brothers and sisters, and always returned with joy to his serious home. His elders interfered little with his passion for reading. When we consider the severity of Low Church opinions in the early part of the nineteenth century, we are surprised to find Macaulay writing to his mother from Mr. Preston's in eager praise of the *Decameron*, and referring her to Dryden's adaptations of Boccaccio's stories. His father disapproved, it is true, of novel-reading, but seems hardly to have resisted, certainly did not succeed in checking, the boy's appetite for novels. As time went on, indeed, father and son were less and less in sympathy. The spirit of ascetic piety and the love of letters are not easily reconciled. Zachary must often have thought his son's pursuits frivolous, and sometimes tried to hinder his son's cleverness from breeding self-conceit. The boy, affectionate and loyal as he was, felt his father's treatment a little unkind. He respected, but certainly did not share, the feelings which were the stay and consolation of his father's life. He fulfilled his duty as a son most nobly, and, it should seem, without even the consciousness that he was doing anything uncommon, but he ceased to be in perfect intelligence with his father.

In October, 1818, Macaulay entered at Trinity College, Cambridge. Here, amid the happiest surroundings, he could indulge his habits of incessant reading and eager conversation. For the peculiar study of Cambridge, the study of mathematics, he had a violent distaste and probably no great capacity. Although Macaulay could argue forcibly upon a practical issue, abstract reasoning was always distasteful to him. He brooded much over what he had read, but rather in order to construct pictures than to analyse ideas. At all periods of life he spent many hours over Plato, but much more for the eloquence, the wit, the irony, than for the dialectic. It was unfortunate that, being ill-suited to mathematics, he had no chance of a discipline in logic and metaphysics, which could never have made him a philosopher, but might have saved him from writing some very unphilosophical tirades. What literary taste and talent could do was accomplished by Macaulay as an undergraduate. He was elected Craven University Scholar in 1821. He twice gained the Chancellor's medal for English verse. He also gained the prize, founded by a certain Mr. Greaves, for the best essay on the conduct and character of William III., a success to which we possibly owe the first suggestion of the *History of England.* He spoke with applause in the debates of the Cambridge Union. But he shone most in those endless, delightful discussions of all great subjects with clever friends which afford the best part of a university education and the truest pleasures of university life. One of these friends, Charles Austin, afterwards so eminent at the parliamentary bar, had the honour of converting Macaulay from Toryism. For a moment Macaulay thought himself a Radical, and it is clear that his father was seriously alarmed. But he speedily became an irreproachable Whig, and seems thenceforwards to have varied as little in his political opinions as is possible to any able man who mixes in the world and reaches middle life. While he cultivated his mind in the way he liked best, he took so little pains to satisfy the examiners that his name did not appear in the Class List of 1822, and his election as a Fellow of Trinity was delayed until 1824.

When Macaulay first went up to Cambridge he had the hope of an independence. But before he had taken his degree this prospect was overcast. More and more possessed with enthusiasm for the cause of negro freedom, Zachary Macaulay neglected his own business concerns until they fell into a disorder beyond the possibility of repair. As his children grew up, his means of settling them in the world diminished, and Thomas was forced to adopt a profession. He chose the law and became a member of Lincoln's Inn, but did not study hard, preferring to read widely and to write when he felt inclined. He had gained a literary reputation before he was called to the bar in 1826, and, although he then went the northern circuit, he can scarcely be said to have practised. Most of the early ventures of his pen were made in *Knight's Quarterly Magazine.* Several have been reprinted in his *Miscellaneous Works.* Macaulay himself preferred the "Conversation between Mr. Abraham Cowley and Mr. John Milton touching the Great Civil War," and there can be little doubt that he was right. For although we may note in all these fugitive pieces the early ripeness of his style, in the "Conversation" we also find a measure and a sober dignity which he did not always preserve in later years and which remind us of his admirable contributions to the *Encyclopœdia Britannica.* The "Conversation" and other pleasant trifles passed, however, with some slight applause. It was the essay on "Milton" in the *Edinburgh Review* for August, 1825, which made Macaulay famous. Crude, garish, and superficial as this essay now seems to many readers, it then carried away the public. Its worst faults as a piece of criticism did not offend, for people were accustomed to criticism drugged with party politics. Its vehement eloquence and clear-cut political doctrines announced a valuable recruit to the Whig party, then returning to life and popularity after a generation of impotence. At a time when letters were far more closely allied with politics than they are now, when political leaders still had pocket boroughs to bestow, and polished eloquence was still a valued accomplishment in public men, the young barrister was not likely to be left much longer to the company of his books.

Macaulay was indeed too poor to make his own way in politics unaided. He had nothing but his fellowship and the emoluments of a Commissioner in Bankruptcy, an office which he owed to the kindness of Lord Lyndhurst. But Lord Lansdowne offered to bring him in for the family borough of Calne without exacting any pledges or imposing any conditions. Macaulay accepted the offer, was returned to Parliament at the general election of 1830, a most inspiring moment for an ardent young Whig, and made his first speech in favour of a bill for removing Jewish disabilities. He was almost immediately recognised as an orator of the highest promise. He finally established his reputation in the memorable debates on the Reform Bill. After his first speech for the bill, the Speaker sent for Macaulay and said that in a prolonged experience he had never seen the House so much excited. "Portions of the speech," said Sir Robert Peel, "were as beautiful as anything I have ever heard or read." Such an orator and such a talker was warmly welcomed by Whig society. In May of 1831 he paid his first visit to Holland House and took his place in the brilliant circle which submitted to the imperious friendship of Lady Holland. Then followed a series of successes which might have spoiled a weak man, but had no effect upon Macaulay's sensible, affectionate nature. In October of 1831 he was invited to become a candidate for the city of Leeds. In the following year he was appointed a member of the Board of Control, and a little later was made its Secretary. Thus began his connection with India. His speeches were heard with wonder and delight in the House, while his conversation, if a continuous flow of utterance can be so termed, amazed and sometimes piqued the cleverest people by its unflagging energy and unequalled range of quotation and allusion. At the same time his simplicity and frankness saved him from most of the ill-will which great talents, too eagerly displayed, are apt to excite. Although he took and enjoyed all the good things which came in his way and never affected the airs of a philosopher, he never became fortune's slave or set his heart on pleasures which at best are not unmingled and must always depend on other men's caprice.

Essentially a man of letters, he never threw himself into the struggle for power with the zest of a born politician like Disraeli. Unusually domestic in his instincts, he did not, at bottom, care very much for social intercourse or even for intellectual display. The ease and freedom of conversation with his books and with his sisters outweighed it all. Moreover, young as he was and buoyant as were his spirits, he bore at this time a heavy load of care. His father, now growing old and weak, was less and less able to make head against adversity, so that the burden of supporting the family fell in some measure upon Macaulay. His fellowship, tenable by a layman for seven years only, was running out and his office of Commissioner in Bankruptcy had been suppressed by a recent reform. Even when his parliamentary fame was at the height, he had been forced to sell his Cambridge medals. So long as his party remained in power, he might reckon on his stipend as Secretary to the Board of Control, but a political reverse might at any moment reduce him to poverty. There was, indeed, another resource. Macaulay had continued to write for the *Edinburgh Review* just often enough to maintain and improve his position as an author from whom great things might be expected, and, with the advantage of those political and parliamentary honours which ensure a sale even to indifferent productions, he might reasonably hope to make a handsome competence by his books. But he wisely and nobly resolved not to traffic away his fine literary gift, not to sink into a bookseller's hack or to write save upon subjects for which he cared and in the manner which his own judgment approved. He preferred to make himself independent by a few years' exile from the pursuits and the friends of his heart. In December of 1833 he accepted a seat in the Supreme Council of the Governor-General of India, and in June of the following year he landed at Madras.

Macaulay remained in India just three years and a half, by far the most memorable portion of his public career. In Parliament he had shown himself a speaker of rare merit, but he had exerted little political influence and had not been admitted to the Cabinet. At Calcutta he set a lasting mark upon the history of British India. By a celebrated minute he induced the Indian Government to decide that whatever funds the State could spare for education should be spent in teaching Western science through the medium of the English language. A little later he was named President of the Commission of Public Instruction, where he could give effect to his own opinions regarding education in India. He was also appointed President of the Commission to inquire into the Jurisprudence and Jurisdiction of the Indian Empire. While holding this position he advised the codification of the criminal law of India, and drafted, doubtless with some help from lawyers of a larger practical experience than his own, that penal code which, after many years and certain amendments, was enacted and is still in force. The Indian Penal Code has always been regarded as one of Macaulay's greatest achievements. Macaulay, indeed, had many qualifications for the office of a legislator, strong common sense, a memory which could hold and combine countless particulars, a style of expression somewhat lacking in grace and subtlety, but clear, precise and penetrating. His public duties at this time might seem enough to tax a vigorous mind and body, yet he contrived to read more books than would have taken up all the leisure of professed literary men and to write his elaborate essays upon "Mackintosh" and "Bacon."

Macaulay was not happy in India. He never had a strong passion for travel or a minute faculty for the observation of outward things. Slow and laborious as were Indian journeys seventy years ago, it excites some surprise that Macaulay should never have spared a few weeks to visit even the best known and most accessible of Indian cities. He seems to have reserved his interest for the history of the English in India, and even this he was content to study in books alone. "I have no words," he wrote to a friend, "to tell you how I pine for England or how intensely bitter exile has been to me, though I hope that I have borne it well. I feel as if I had no other wish than to see my country again and die." This feeling of home-sickness was made more poignant by events in his family. Not long after leaving England he lost a beloved sister, Mrs. Cropper; and his sister Hannah who accompanied him to India married there a distinguished civilian, Mr. Charles Trevelyan. It is true that the parting of brother from sister could hardly have been more gentle, for the Trevelyans lived under Macaulay's roof and returned with him to England. But circumstances had so centred Macaulay's warm affection upon his sisters that changes which other men accept as a matter of course and which he acknowledged to be inevitable clouded his life and all but broke his spirit. The constant decline of his father gave a fresh sting to the desire to be at home once more. At the close of 1837 he felt justified in returning to his native country. He sailed in January of 1838, but the voyage was tedious, and before he could touch land his father had expired.

He was now somewhat lonely, but he had purchased that independence which is inestimable to the true man of letters. He had saved a large sum, he had no expensive tastes, he was a bachelor and, so far as is known, had no serious wish to be otherwise. For some time past he had thought of writing a great historical work. In the year of his return, if not earlier, he fixed upon the subject. "The first part," he wrote to Macvey Napier, "(which, I think, will take five octavo volumes), will extend from the Revolution to the commencement of Sir Robert Walpole's long Administration; a period of three or four and thirty very eventful years. From the commencement of Walpole's Administration to the commencement of the American War, events may be despatched more concisely. From the commencement of the American War, it will again become necessary to be copious. These at least are my present notions. How far I shall bring the narrative down I have not determined. The death of George IV. would be the best halting-place. The *History* would then be an entire view of all the transactions which took place between the Revolution which brought the Crown into harmony with the Parliament and the Revolution which brought the Parliament into harmony with the nation." We can only regret that he did not immediately bend all his energies to the execution of this vast design. An Italian tour in the autumn and winter of 1838 was a well-earned holiday; but his return to political life, his *Lays of Ancient Rome* and his later essays were so many distractions from his true occupation. While living in India he had written:—

"In the quiet of my own little grass-plot when the moon at its rising finds me with the *Philoctetes* or the *De Finibus* in my hand—I often wonder what strange infatuation leads men who can do something better to squander their intellect, their health, their energy on such objects as those which most statesmen are engaged in pursuing. . . . That a man, before whom the two paths of literature and politics lie open, and who might hope for eminence in either, should choose politics and quit literature seems to me madness."

But when he was at home again the contagious excitement of politics was too much for his philosophy. He let himself be nominated for Edinburgh in the summer of 1839, and in the autumn was Secretary at War with a place in the Melbourne Cabinet. Hence, although he had begun his *History of England*, he could make only slow and interrupted progress. The fall of a weak ministry in 1841 relieved him from regular political duty. But in 1842 he turned aside to write the *Lays of Ancient Rome*, and thus the *History* was thrown back again. Even after the publication of the *Lays* he paused occasionally to write an article for the *Edinburgh Review*. These later essays are among his best, yet we can hardly help regretting the time they cost.

In the year 1841 Macaulay had taken chambers in the Albany, where he could combine much more than the quiet of a college with such social intercourse as he desired. At the same time he was able to enjoy the genial atmosphere of domestic life, for his brother-in-law, Mr. Trevelyan, had been appointed Assistant Secretary to the Treasury, so that Mrs. Trevelyan and her children were fixed in London. He now led for many years an uneventful life of strenuous but pleasant labour, varied by an occasional tour in the British Isles or on the continent. Although he had not quite done with politics, political ambition was nearly extinct in his mind, and he lived for his book, for his sister and for his nephews and nieces, who were as dear to his affectionate nature as his own children could have been. His favourite pleasures were simple, an exploration of the London bookstalls or a long walk in the country, usually with a book in his hand. He wrote steadily but not rapidly, and in 1848 he published the first two volumes of the *History of England*, which carry the narrative down to the accession of William and Mary. They were received with general though not unqualified praise by the critics, and with unequalled enthusiasm by the multitude of readers. Since the appearance of the Waverley novels no prose work had so fully satisfied at once the fastidious and the popular taste. Since the appearance of the *Decline and Fall* such a mass of historical knowledge had never been presented in a form so brilliant and captivating. Prince Albert, who came from a country where the professorial office is held in honour, amazed the successful historian with an offer of the Chair of Modern History at Cambridge. Macaulay respectfully declined to exchange the freedom of his library and the sense of living in London for the task of lecturing to undergraduates in a provincial city.

He now returned to his task with added zest and confidence and fuller leisure than he had yet known, for he had ceased to be a public man. On the fall of Sir Robert Peel's Administration he had been made Paymaster in Lord John Russell's Cabinet, but in the general election of the following year he lost his seat at Edinburgh. He owed this repulse partly to a neglect of the little compliances by which members of Parliament conciliate support, and partly to the liberal views which he had expressed on the Maynooth grant and on other ecclesiastical questions. He commemorated it in a poem which scarcely adds to his literary fame. His time was now all his own. But his fate is one of innumerable warnings to those who unduly defer the appointed business of their lives. In 1852 his health, hitherto excellent, gave way. Extreme languor and oppression, with painful difficulty in breathing, announced a failure of the heart. "I have become twenty years older in a week," he wrote. "A mile is more to me now than ten miles a year ago." Although he always disclaimed the character of an industrious man, it is certain that he had long overtasked his powers, and that his habit of ceaseless reading, even at meals and on his walks, had hastened the time of bodily decay. But with admirable courage, good temper and resignation, he collected all his remaining strength to push forward the *History*, even while he surrendered the dear hope of its completion. Two more volumes appeared in 1855. "Praise greatly preponderates," he noted, "but there is a strong admixture of censure." This was inevitable. The great and real merits of the *History* were on the surface, and when the first volumes appeared had carried all before them. Since then the public had had leisure to re-read and to criticise, and in the new volumes the defects, also real and serious, attracted more attention.

What remains of his life can be shortly told. The citizens of Edinburgh, repenting their injustice, had elected him again in 1852. After a vain struggle to discharge the duties of a member of the House of Commons, he applied for the Chiltern Hundreds in the beginning of 1856 and bade farewell to public life. About the same time he left his chambers in the Albany to settle in Holly Lodge, Campden Hill, where he spent his last years. In 1857 he was created a peer by the title of Baron Macaulay of Rothley. His life was now very quiet, but not unhappy. He scarcely ever went into society, but made a few intimate friends welcome at his house, and, cheered by those close kindred upon whom he had spent so much affection, worked on as steadily as dwindling strength would permit. The lives of Atterbury, Bunyan, Goldsmith, Johnson and the younger Pitt which he contributed to the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, and which in some respects excel even the best of the *Essays*, prove that his literary power and skill had suffered no abatement. He almost finished a fifth volume of the *History*. Gradually he became so weak that the least shock might prove fatal. When Sir Charles Trevelyan was appointed Governor of Madras, the prospect of parting from his sister and her children gave Macaulay a pang which may have hastened the end by a few weeks or even months. He died on the 28th of December, 1859, and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

Few distinguished authors have been so transparent in nature as Macaulay. He was a good, honest man, simple in his tastes, blameless in his pleasures, kind-hearted and affectionate, a most dutiful son, a more than exemplary brother, a faithful friend, honourable and patriotic in public life and in private life generous and charitable. Neither social nor literary success turned his head or chilled his feelings. Nothing could be more amiable than his behaviour towards children. "He was beyond all comparison," writes his nephew, "the best of playfellows; unrivalled in the invention of games and never weary of repeating them. He had an inexhaustible repertory of small dramas for the benefit of his nieces, in which he sustained an endless variety of parts with a skill that at any rate was sufficient for his audience." For his little companions he wrote innumerable verses, usually droll, though sometimes graceful or pathetic. When they were older he wrote long letters to them, giving them his serious thoughts about life and literature in the form suited to their age. These are small things, but they come out of a loving nature. An extreme sensibility to written or acted representations of woe has often been the mark of hard or frivolous natures. But in Macaulay it was not weakness, for he had a singularly robust understanding, nor yet affectation, for he was prompt to relieve real distress. Although he might be termed upon a review of his whole life a happy man, he had his own share of disappointments and sacrifices which he bore with dignity, never seeming to think that he was ill used or making a grievance of what was unavoidable. Compared with many other writers who have had a wider sympathy with men and a deeper insight into things spiritual, but have been lacking in healthy stoicism, Macaulay makes a manly and a genial figure. The same frank, cheerful temper which is manifest in his life found expression in his books. Macaulay, indeed, is often indiscriminate and unjust in his judgment of men and of parties. But he always means to tell the truth, and his sympathy is always with the right so far as it comes within his ken. He is instinctively on the side of freedom and tolerance and reason and honesty and humanity. He feels an unforced loathing for all that is silly or hypocritical or base or cruel. He is in the best sense a moral writer who imparts to his readers without preaching a livelier sympathy for all that is good and a deeper repugnance for all that is evil.

If we ask what was wanting to this fine character, the answer might be, depth. Macaulay's nature was limited. Almost free from bad passions, but dwelling habitually in external things, Macaulay escaped much suffering and many sins, and remained always young, but also remained ignorant of much that others learn by their own mistakes and struggles. He seems never to have been in love, he went through no spiritual conflicts, he had not even that mournful sense of man's weakness and the world's instability which haunts all meditative and poetic minds. He took life as he found it, enjoyed what he could honourably gain, and either seldom thought about the rest or held that there was little use in thinking. Perhaps this is the course wisest for ourselves and most beneficial to others, but those who have not felt the burden of humanity must not expect to be loved by men. And so Macaulay's life, although upright and unsullied, is not particularly interesting. We cannot imagine Macaulay inspiring in thousands the deep concern which, despite so many ugly faults, was poured forth upon Rousseau and upon Byron. It seems unfair that this should be so, and that one who acted honestly and kindly throughout should appeal to our sympathy so much less than those who were so often vicious and, what is far worse, vain of their vices. But our feelings on this point are scarcely in our control. A man betrays his own character in his judgments upon other men. Here, no doubt, Macaulay often shows good sense and good feeling. But he is too fond of enforcing truisms, too much dominated by convention, too little exempt from the accidental bias of his age and country. He is perplexed and therefore annoyed in the presence of exceptional characters. His too prompt and emphatic severity is another failing of the same kind. Even when he tried hard to define the essence of a character uncongenial to his own, as in the famous passage about the Puritans in the essay on "Milton," he displayed not so much the delicate insight of the observer as the resounding energy of the rhetorician. A certain defect of imagination which study and experience mitigated, but could not cure, limited his moral sympathy and too often betrayed his moral judgment.

As every great writer is necessarily somewhat of a teacher we are pardonably curious to know how he conceived of the universe and of his own place in it, what was his philosophy, what was his creed; and we feel this curiosity more strongly if he lived at a time when the old foundations of belief were breaking up and men were forced to build anew. But we may well doubt whether Macaulay had any definite philosophical system. He had, indeed, read many philosophical treatises. But when he offers to discuss a purely philosophical problem he too often betrays a downright poverty of mind. His essay on History betrays his incurable preference for rhetoric as opposed to dialectic. In his criticism of James Mill's theory of government he appears to more advantage, for there he brought his practical sense and historical knowledge to bear upon the abstractions of a theorist who, in spite of talent and sincerity, was the veriest slave of system. From the essay on "Bacon" we might conclude that he thought all metaphysical inquiry a waste of time, and the conscious pursuit of a moral ideal, merely because it was reasonable, no better than affectation. In the essay upon "Ranke's *History of the Popes*" Macaulay is heard with respect so long as he dilates in lofty and sonorous language upon the protracted life and energy of the Church of Rome, but when he goes on to consider why it has survived through so many centuries, and whether it is likely to endure as many more, he raises questions which cannot be answered without reference to a philosophy of religion, and his philosophy proves singularly inadequate. He implies that a creed is a set of propositions not merely incapable of proof or disproof, but so far remote from the general intellectual and moral life of mankind that the simplest barbarian can judge of their truth as well as the most cultivated critic. If this be the case, he ought to have explained how men found it difficult in the sixteenth century to believe what had been accepted in the fifteenth. So too he is surprised that later revolts against the authority of the Church of Rome should all have taken a form so different from Protestantism. It would have been more remarkable had it been otherwise. Just as Luther and Calvin could not regard the doctrines of the Church with the eyes of St. Thomas, later generations could not view those doctrines with the eyes of Luther or Calvin. Every age thinks and must think for itself on those high matters, and this fact should have shown Macaulay the weakness of his original proposition, that in religious inquiry men of the most different intelligence and character stand on the same footing. The truth is that Macaulay was one of the least speculative among literary men. He argued practical questions with great vigour, but was apparently incapable of intense meditation.

We are equally at a loss when we try to discover Macaulay's personal feelings about religion. As a historian and a statesman, he knew that religious differences have been of incalculable moment in public affairs. He had read a truly surprising amount of divinity of different ages, and in his controversy with Mr. Gladstone showed that he had as ready a command over this as over all his other acquisitions. He always speaks of things sacred with grave respect, but avoids committing himself to any doctrine with all the caution of a member of Parliament. When we turn from his published writings to the freer utterances of his letters and journals, we note an equal reticence. None of the crises of life, not the loss of any of those whom he loved most dearly, not the sense of his own approaching end seems ever to have called forth a reflection which would illumine for others the depths of his soul. There is, indeed, one touching exception. On his thirty-fifth birthday, successful, honoured and full of life as he was, he interrupts his journal with the mournful lines of Sophocles :—

> *"μὴ φῦναι τον ἅπαντα νικᾷ λόγον·*
> *το δ', ἐπεὶ φανῇ*
> *βῆναι κεῖθεν, ὅθενπερ ἥκει*
> *πολὺ δεύτερον, ὡς τάχιστα."*[1]

But this entry, so far as we know, stands alone. On spiritual as on philosophical themes he was habitually silent. What was most distinctive in his early religious training had evidently been uncongenial and had fallen from him like a garment, leaving little but that unfavourable estimate of philosophy which so often characterised the Evangelical school. Yet it awoke no spirit of rebellion or even of far-reaching inquiry, as distasteful teaching has so often done. On the contrary, swayed perhaps by a deep sense of his father's goodness and self-sacrifice, Macaulay retained a respect and tenderness for the Puritans which break forth in all his writings from the essay on "Milton" to the "Life of Bunyan," and seem a little at variance with his genial and worldly view of life. The same Protestant sympathies were shown in his dislike of the Tractarians. But this is almost all that we can gather about Macaulay's religious opinions. Probably he did not feel the necessity for any sharply defined doctrines. Certainly he did not live in habitual communion with the unseen world.

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[1] The best of all is never to have been born; the next best by far, having come to light, is to return as speedily as may be thither whence we came.—"Œdipus at Colonus," lines 1225-8.

At first sight Macaulay might appear one of the most versatile of men; a poet, a critic, a historian, an orator, a politician in England and a jurist in India. In the main he was a man with one interest and one pursuit. Circumstances drew Macaulay from his books, made him a member of Parliament, placed him at the Board of Control and in the Governor-General's Council, and finally raised him to be a Cabinet minister, but honourably as he sustained all these public parts, public life interested him less in itself than as seen through the medium of history and literature. Experience rather impaired than confirmed an ambition in its origin so literary. Macaulay did not feel the irresistible instinct of the genuine public man for persuading, controlling and managing other men. He was an eloquent speaker, but his speeches are not essentially different from his essays. They are admirable for clearness, vigour and rapidity, they display a marvellous range of information and often great argumentative power, but they reveal little of the adroitness with which the inspired public speaker plays upon the common mind. Their author seems more concerned to pour out his own thoughts than to make his hearers think as his purpose requires. It is characteristic of Macaulay as an orator that he spoke very fast, with very little variety of cadence and almost without action. Macaulay was an industrious public servant, but no reference in his letters or journals betrays the zest for business of the born administrator. We cannot imagine him rubbing his hands, like the famous Frenchman as he sat down to his desk, with joy at the thought of all the business to be done. His most durable piece of official work, the Indian Penal Code, was in great measure a literary achievement. Literature and history were the true business and the unfailing solace of his life, and on his performance as a historian and man of letters his lasting fame must be built.

Everybody knows how immediate and how extraordinary was the success of Macaulay's writings. Macaulay attracted the general public by his combination of a somewhat common way of thinking with immense energy, untiring vivacity and marvellous power of exposition. The serious, respectable Englishman was delighted to find in Macaulay's pages his own meaning, although infinitely better expressed. A man so accomplished in all the lore of the past, yet so fervently in love with the present, a man of letters who could extract pleasure even from rows of suburban villas, who exulted in the growth of the Customs revenue and was moved almost to tears by the first great international exhibition, such a man of letters could not but charm so sanguine and self-confident an age. Some illustrious authors have made their name by reviling their contemporaries. Macaulay owed much of his rapid popularity to the contrary process. In this optimism there was nothing insincere, for Macaulay was far more genuine than most masters of rhetoric. He was the poet, not the parasite of his own generation. Along with Thackeray and Dickens he will always be read by those who wish to understand the English nation in the middle of the nineteenth century.

But an immediate, overwhelming success of this kind was sure to be followed by a violent reaction. Men acute and learned enough to discern the faults of a popular idol, and possibly whetted in their criticism by the thought that, with talents and attainments in some respects equal or superior, they had found no comparable recognition, have keenly scrutinised and austerely judged these famous writings which once seemed so perfect and still remain so popular. Macaulay's critical essays have been pronounced void of delicacy and of penetration; his *Lays of Ancient Rome* have been derided as pinchbeck poetry; his *History of England* has been slighted as the outcome of party spirit, an undiscerning hero-worship and a weak desire to be picturesque. Even his bold and stirring rhetoric has been censured as hard and monotonous. So vigorous and many-sided has been the attack, that his gigantic reputation has been considerably lowered. A majority, perhaps, of well-read persons would be half ashamed to own that they admire Macaulay. But now that most of the eminent men who led the attack upon his fame as critic, poet and historian have passed away, we can estimate his works with a calmness impossible to contemporaries, and we shall probably conclude that Macaulay is an English classic, although not a classic of the most exalted kind.

Perhaps the first and most vivid impression which most persons derive from Macaulay's writings is that of ample and varied knowledge. Extensive as his reading really was, it appears still greater because his powerful memory gave him full command over it and enabled him, like a skilful general with a well-disciplined army, to bring all his forces to bear upon the point which for the time being was vital. There is some interest in attempting to trace the bounds of his studies. Macaulay knew the Greek and Latin classics well, and appreciated them, not with the minute precision of a commentator, but with the keen relish of a man of the world and a man of letters. He was also deeply versed in the literatures of England, France and Italy as their limits were fixed in his youth, for his mind had been formed before mediæval authors became objects of curiosity, and with the works of his own age his sympathy was imperfect. He was familiar with almost everything that had been written in English during the three centuries that followed the revival of learning. What he knew best were the writings of the period from the Restoration to the French Revolution. He was steeped in the poetry, the memoirs, the histories, the divinity, the pamphlets and political orations of that time, although he seldom fell into the error of overrating their intrinsic value. But he seems not to have cared much for anything written before the age of Spenser and Shakespeare, and, though he lived at Cambridge when Wordsworth was in the ascendant there, he never quite yielded himself to the inspiration of the new school of poetry. In after years he might be said to turn away from contemporary authors. We should not have expected him to taste Browning, but he seems to have cared little for Tennyson, he did not read Carlyle or Ruskin, and Buckle's famous book only suggested to him a parallel between the author and Warburton. So likewise with

Macaulay's knowledge of French. Froissart and Comines seem to have been the only mediæval writers who attracted his attention. He never quotes Rabelais or even Montaigne, and seldom if ever does he mention in his letters or journals a French author of the romantic school. For him French literature might almost be said to begin with Corneille and to end with Voltaire. The roll of Italian classics begins in a more distant age. Contrary to what we might have fancied from his temperament, Macaulay knew Dante well and loved him dearly. With Petrarch and Boccaccio he was intimate. His familiarity with the Italian authors of the sixteenth century and even of the age of decline which followed, his ready allusions to Machiavelli or Guicciardini, to Tasso or to Filicaja, excite more remark now than they would have done seventy years ago, when cultivated Englishmen still piqued themselves on an acquaintance with the graceful literature of Italy. Macaulay's knowledge of the great Spanish writers was a rarer accomplishment. German was scarcely known to his youth, nor was German thought ever really appropriated by him, although, as time went on, he read and admired the more famous poets and critics of Germany. Dutch he learnt for the purpose of writing his *History*. Thus it should seem that Macaulay's knowledge of literature, although very great, was neither encyclopædic nor unsurpassed. Even in England and in the nineteenth century several scholars might be named, his equals or possibly his superiors in this respect. But it would be hard to name any man of affairs who had read so much and at the same time so judiciously, for Macaulay seems to have profited by all his studies, and that which he ignored, however valuable in itself, would probably have been of little use to his somewhat rigid although capacious intellect.

To make Macaulay's fulness of reading popular there was needed Macaulay's style. His style has been by turns lauded and decried beyond reason, but none can doubt that it is genuine. As is the case with every born writer Macaulay's style reveals the man. Always vigorous, always clear, never careless, but often tending to become monotonous, it is the expression of a strong direct mind which glanced far over the fields of history and literature and saw vividly whatever it saw at all. The sentences are always short, even when the space between two full stops is long. We may apply to Macaulay's most swelling periods what he himself observes about Temple's: "A critic who examines them carefully will find that they are not swollen by parenthetical matter, that their structure is scarcely ever intricate, that they are formed merely by accumulation, and that by the simple process of now and then leaving out a conjunction and now and then substituting a full stop for a semicolon, they might, without any alteration in the order of the words, be broken up into very short periods with no sacrifice except that of euphony." This simplicity of structure involves a simplicity of rhythm. Macaulay's rhythm is penetrating and serves to drive home his meaning, but it has little range or complexity of music. He has been well compared to a man playing everlastingly upon a silver trumpet. Macaulay was fastidious, but not finical in the choice of words, and his diction is pure and strong, but again, eloquent and fervid though he be, limited. His trick of repeating the same word over and over again the more forcibly to arrest the reader's attention is obvious and has always been remarked. However he may occasionally abuse it, it is an allowable artifice, consistent with the utmost command of language and with the utmost variety of phrase where variety is desired. Such exquisite gradation, however, Macaulay does not exhibit. Certain useful words such as "great" or "eminent" occur repeatedly in close neighbourhood, where a mind more sensitive to shades of difference in thought would probably have used different adjectives. The monotony of words, like the monotony of rhythm and structure, had its origin in a certain monotony of thought.

Yet even Macaulay's bitterest enemies will allow that this monotony does not issue in dulness and that the total impression of any of his best essays is strikingly rich and diversified. The genuine excellence of Macaulay's style consists above all in its fresh and hearty vigour. Macaulay interests us because he is so much interested in his subject himself. He has neither doubts as to its importance nor difficulties as to its meaning. It may be true that usually he sees only one aspect of the matter in hand, but for that very reason he sees so clearly. Next to this abounding energy Macaulay's most compelling attraction is his fulness of mind. Not that Macaulay had invariably made a deep study of his theme, for his knowledge of that was often incomplete, sometimes superficial, but he had been reading all his life, he had gone into the great world, he had borne his part in administration and debate, and all his literature and experience were garnered in a most capacious memory where everything could be found as it was wanted. The mere movement of the pen seems to have excited his brain to that point at which parallels, quotations, allusions, sonorous and historic names poured forth without effort and without limit. If Macaulay does not give you many ideas, he reminds you of many things, and if he does not probe the soul deeply, he introduces you to a multitude of persons. In nothing does he show himself more adroit than in his use of proper names. Over and over again he produces a rich effect by disposing them lavishly yet artfully. Where a plain man might say that the Spanish possessions in America extended right across the tropics, Macaulay fills the ear and the imagination by telling us that "the American dependencies of the Castilian crown still extended far to the north of Cancer and far to the south of Capricorn." Cromwell, when he chastised the Bey of Tunis and interposed between the Waldenses and their tyrants, becomes "the great man whose imperial voice had arrested the sails of the Libyan pirates and the persecuting fires of Rome." When Macaulay wishes to tell us that Addison in his *Travels* had nothing to say about Italian poetry he does it in this sumptuous manner:—

"To the best of our remembrance Addison does not mention Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio, Boiardo, Berni, Lorenzo de Medici or Machiavelli. He coldly tells us that at Ferrara he saw the tomb of Ariosto, and that at Venice he heard the gondoliers sing verses of Tasso. But for Tasso and Ariosto he cared far less than for Valerius Flaccus and Sidonius Apollinaris. The gentle flow of the Ticin brings a line of Silius to his mind. The sulphurous stream of Albula suggests to him several passages of Martial. But he has not a word to say of the illustrious dead of Santa Croce; he crosses the wood of Ravenna without recollecting the Spectre

Huntsman, and wanders up and down Rimini without a thought of Francesca."

What a melodious list of beautiful names! what a delightful train of poetic and historic association! what a sense of meeting a throng of great and famous or lovely and unhappy people! It should be noted, too, that Macaulay dispensed his enormous wealth of allusion with judgment. His references are to persons, places and things which a cultivated public might be supposed to know or at least to have heard of. He did not, like some learned authors, illustrate the familiar by the obscure, or the great by the little. To his mastery over the art of allusion it is chiefly due that the *Essays*, although they deal with subjects drawn for the most part from a narrow field, form a sort of introduction to history and to literature generally, and that they have such a virtue to excite curiosity, the wish to know more.

Charm of a more subtle and delicate kind is wanting, it is true, in Macaulay's works. A certain commonness already noted in his thought could not but manifest itself in his style. Macaulay is always the rhetorician, that is, he is always addressing a crowd, and he therefore instinctively omits what the average man will not instinctively appreciate. His logical power is very considerable so long as he keeps within the circle of ordinary interests, but he has neither the good nor the evil of subtlety. His heart is sound and he is loyal to the right, but he does not penetrate far into human nature. He has a healthy sense of the ridiculous, but no very exquisite gift of humour, a kindly affectionate nature, but no command of the highest pathos. Too often he overloads praise or blame, and enforces very simple psychological discoveries with superfluous energy. He very seldom strikes out a choice inimitable phrase. He never presents us with a lovely image. The disproportionate interest taken in the famous sentence about the New Zealander sufficiently shows that he was not rich in the imaginative vein. For these reasons Macaulay is, of all illustrious writers, the one least apt to be made an intimate, a lifelong companion by those who love literature. Providence designed him to be the admiration of many, not the delight of a few.

It is above all as a narrator that Macaulay has gained a high place in English literature. Nothing seems easier than to tell a plain story well, and few things are more difficult, as all who have made the attempt know. Macaulay's narrative is clear and full as a brimming river. With the glance of genius he seizes all the particulars which can contribute to the general effect. He sets these in the most natural order and in the strongest light. He never hurries or becomes obscure in the endeavour to be brief, but moves onward swiftly and gracefully, always satisfying and always renewing the reader's curiosity. Many admirable specimens of his skill in narrative are scattered through the *Essays*, but for the full display of his power a larger scope was required and was afforded by the *History*. Were the *History* worthless as a source of information, it would still be highly valuable as a model of the way in which information should be given. Every reader feels the animation and the movement of each individual passage. The skill with which every little part is combined in the whole, the mastery with which the different threads of the story are interwoven, is less obvious, but is, as Mr. Cotter Morrison has observed, even more admirable. Faults, indeed, may be detected, as in every great fabric of art. The emphasis is too uniform; there is too little interchange of quiet with rhetorical passages; at one time trifles hardly worth noting are dwelt upon; at another, things of consequence are stated in terms too general; the writer too often deviates into the picturesque, or pauses in digressions which, though short, are scarcely connected with his tale. But when every blemish has been acknowledged, this grand fragment of historical narrative compels our admiration. Since Gibbon's *Decline and Fall* nothing comparable has appeared in English, and seldom has it been surpassed in any foreign language.

Macaulay's verse was only the amusement of idle hours. Had it never been written, his fame would stand pretty much where it does now. Nevertheless it deserves notice in any endeavour to estimate Macaulay as an author. Like his prose, it has been very severely judged by critics who carry weight, and like his prose it has enjoyed a long popularity. Most of his pieces profess to be ballads, literary imitations of narrative poems composed in a rude age by and for unlettered men. They were in some degree inspired by Scott and are numbered with the works of the Romantic period. In reality they are rhetorical displays with qualities of diction, structure and rhythm very like the diction, structure and rhythm of Macaulay's prose. In both we trace the same clearness, energy and speed, the same metallic brilliance and clangour. The enumeration of the forces of the League on the morning of Ivry, or of the beacons that arose upon the night after the Armada came in view, is in principle and even in execution very like the recital of the illustrious personages present at the trial of Warren Hastings, or of the warlike nations that descended to the sack of the Mogul Empire. The verses which conclude the "Prophecy of Capys" have little in common with "Marmion" and far less in common with "Chevy Chase," but they might easily be moulded into a stirring peroration:—

"Then where o'er two bright havens
    The towers of Corinth frown;
Where the gigantic King of Day
    On his own Rhodes looks down;
Where soft Orontes murmurs
    Beneath the laurel shades;
Where Nile reflects the endless length
    Of dark-red colonnades;
Where in the still deep water,
    Sheltered from waves and blasts,
Bristles the dusky forest
    Of Byrsa's thousand masts;
Where fur-clad hunters wander
    Amid the northern ice;
Where o'er the sand of morning land
    The camel bears the spice;
Where Atlas flings his shadow
    Far o'er the western foam,
Shall be great fear on all who hear
    The mighty name of Rome."

Even the simplest, most serious and most touching of Macaulay's poetical efforts, the Epitaph on a Jacobite, bears this rhetorical impress to a degree which detracts from its pathos. To say that Macaulay, even when composing in verse, was always a rhetorician rather than a poet, is not to deny his poems a real excellence; it only amounts to saying that their excellence is not of the highest kind. They are original and they are vivid, and, though a time comes when we cease to take them very seriously, we have all owed to them some hours of real enjoyment.

When we have refined all we can, genius escapes us still, and nothing can better serve to show that some portion of that divine essence was vouchsafed to Macaulay than the obstinate life of his *Essays*. In a letter stamped with his peculiar blunt honesty he has himself told us how contributions to periodicals must be written and what faults they are almost certain to display.

"They are not expected to be highly finished. Their natural life is only six weeks. Sometimes their writer is at a distance from the works to which he wants to refer. Sometimes he is forced to hurry through his task in order to catch the post. He may blunder; he may contradict himself; he may break off in the middle of a story; he may give an immoderate extension to one part of his subject and dismiss an equally important part in a few words. All this is readily forgiven if there be a certain spirit and vivacity in his style."

It would not be difficult to trace in some of Macaulay's *Essays* some of these defects, and Macaulay hesitated long before he would consent to reprint them. Yet they have now been before the world for two generations; they have been read by millions; they have been criticised by the ablest and the severest pens; and they are still alive. They are alive with all their faults and in virtue of their vigorous originality. For, as Mr. Cotter Morrison, no flattering biographer, has said, Macaulay made of the review article a new thing; he invented a new type of essay almost as much as Addison did in his *Spectators*, and, although Macaulay's style invites parody—and many clever writers have responded to the invitation—the *Essays* remain alone, and nobody has succeeded in producing anything so good of that kind. This, after all, is the touchstone of literature. Very few of the books written in any age can stand its application, and those that do may be certified as classics, whatever the precise rank to which they should be assigned.

The essential qualities of mind are the same in all the *Essays*. In some respects no great writer was ever more uniformly equal to himself or more immediately recognisable in all his works. Yet the differences between the *Essays* in point of merit are very considerable. Of the two classes into which they fall, the historical and the critical, the first are by far superior. Although Macaulay had some of the most essential qualifications for criticism, sound common sense, unfeigned love of letters and vast knowledge, it cannot be said that Macaulay was a great critic. He was free from those antiquarian or sentimental foibles which so often mislead lesser men. He was too honest and manly not to have a keen eye and a hearty repulsion for everything that was morbid or affected, or exaggerated or silly. He lived in habitual converse with the best minds of all nations. He felt the truest reverence for those select masterpieces which have come down to us undimmed by the flight of ages and uninjured by the revolutions that destroy States and creeds, but have no power over consummate beauty. He had the liveliest relish for fine rhetoric, the most acute sensibility to fine poetry. He possessed in his marvellous memory an unfailing store of literary parallels and illustrations. A critic thus endowed by nature and enriched by study could not but be often right in his judgments, and Macaulay's admiration was often as discriminating as enthusiastic. We should not have expected him to care much for Goethe, yet the words of Mignon—

"Und Marmorbilder stehn und sehn mich an:
Was hat man dir, du armes Kind, gethan?"—

drew from him the remark that he knew no two lines in the world he would sooner have written than those. What he lacked as a critic was not knowledge or feeling, but the philosophic mind. He was not subtle nor analytical. With his usual good sense he felt, and with his usual honesty he avowed, this defect:—

"You will believe me," he wrote to Macvey Napier, "that I tell you what I sincerely think when I say that I am not successful in analysing the effect of works of genius. I have written several things on historical, political and moral questions of which, on the fullest reconsideration, I am not ashamed, and by which I should be willing to be estimated; but I have never written a page of criticism on poetry or the fine arts which I would not burn if I had the power. Hazlitt used to say of himself, 'I am nothing if not critical.' The case with me is directly the reverse. I have a strong and acute enjoyment of works of the imagination; but I have never habituated myself to dissect them. Perhaps I enjoy them the more keenly, for that very reason. Such books as Lessing's *Laocöon*, such passages as the criticism on Hamlet in *Wilhelm Meister*, fill me with admiration and despair."

This frank and just acknowledgment proves that Macaulay could make a return upon himself, and renders further insistence needless, nay unmannerly.

Macaulay did not escape the prevalent disease of literary criticism in his generation, a political and party bias. The desire to maul a formidable Tory prompted him in the essay on the "War of the Succession" to describe Swift in terms equally violent and foolish, as "the apostate politician, the ribald priest, the perjured lover, a heart burning with hatred against the whole human race, a mind richly stored with images from the dunghill and the lazarhouse." The wish to glorify a consistent Whig led him to overcharge his praise of Addison, whose real merit might have dispensed with this exaggeration. Had Macaulay not taken the Puritan side in politics, he might have qualified his boundless admiration of Bunyan's allegory. Had Macaulay not hated the Stuarts, he might have toned down his philippic against the comedy of the Restoration. At times also Macaulay's criticism is coloured by the overbearing national self-esteem so common among Englishmen of the generation which followed the battle of Waterloo. And although he broke free at an early age from the narrow modes of thought prevalent in his father's circle, something of the Evangelical straitness may now and then be traced in his judgment both of men and of books. It appears in his remarks upon Horace Walpole, and it gives a faint but unmistakable flavour to his remarks about the natives of India during his residence in that country and in after years. So ardent a classical scholar might have been expected to take some interest in the last form of polytheism prevalent among civilised men, but to Macaulay the Hindu religion seemed a mere unaccountable absurdity which a little education on European principles would dispel. On the practical question as to the best way of spending public money to advance education in

India he was probably right; but no missionary could be more unsympathetic in regard to Oriental modes of thought.

For so sedulous a reader of poetry Macaulay had little sense of the beauty of nature. While yet a mere schoolboy, he unblushingly proclaimed his indifference to the country and his insatiable longing for London. In his essay on "Dante" he insisted that the life of a great city affords more matter even to the poetic imagination than hills and woods and streams. He laughed, not without provocation, at the solemn tone in which the Lake school descanted upon scenery and the mysterious operation of rural sights and sounds. Nor was Macaulay sensitive to the impressions derived from plastic art. When he travelled in Italy he felt the massive grandeur of Genoa and the ample magnificence of St. Peter's, but he rarely noted any save the broadest and most inevitable of artistic effects. In St. Mark's his eye was caught less by the unrivalled harmony of rich and solemn colour than by the badness of the mediæval hexameters inscribed on the walls. Even in his latest and most finished writings it will be found that, while the allusions to politics and literature are full of reality, the allusions to nature and to plastic art are conventional. Something of this deficiency was perhaps due to his Puritan ancestry and home. At all events Macaulay had it in common with his age. Like his contemporaries, he seems not to have been one moment depressed by the extreme ugliness of modern civilisation. The sort of discontent which pervades the writings of Ruskin or of Arnold was unknown to him. In his criticism of Southey's *Colloquies* he readily exposed Southey's ignorance and inability to argue, but he did not see or would not confess that there was an element of truth in Southey's denunciation of manufacturing towns and the manufacturing system. An independent perception of beauty and sincere enjoyment of beautiful things are perhaps as rare to-day as they were in Macaulay's time, but now that we have all learnt the language of sensibility we are the more surprised at the comparative obtuseness of such a cultivated mind.

Most of the *Essays*, and indeed the best, are historical. They deserve their fame, although their merit has sometimes been overrated or misunderstood. The first virtue of a historian is industry in collecting and weighing evidence. As Macaulay wrote a *History* which is a work of wide and deep research, the *Essays* have often been taken for works of the same type. This is a mistake. Apart from the singular power which they display, the *Essays* resemble other periodical writing. When composing the *Essays* Macaulay seldom went far to find his materials. With one or two exceptions he relied upon authorities already in print and easily accessible; he did not always make a severely critical study of these, and he wrote largely out of his stock of general information as a man of letters and public man. It is the fulness of this general information which gives the *Essays* a semblance of profound historical learning. In one or two of his later *Essays* he occasionally availed himself of knowledge which he had acquired with a view to using it in the *History;* but even the later *Essays* are not erudite or exhaustive. Macaulay's historical *Essays*, in short, are brilliant sketches, not critical monographs. This he was partly aware of, and this, no doubt, accounts for his long reluctance to have them reprinted. "The moment I come forward to claim a higher rank," he wrote, "I must expect to be judged by a higher standard." What he foresaw has happened. When the varied information and literary splendour of the *Essays* had gained them a lasting popularity, flaws in their substance were exposed to the keenest critical illumination, and mistakes or omissions of fact have been discovered in all; in some, very grave mistakes or omissions.

But historians do not differ merely as to the industry with which they amass facts or the skill with which they sift evidence; they differ also in their conception of history. History may be written upon different principles and with different objects, and all forms of history are legitimate so long as each is good in its own kind. When history was first written, it was with the mixed purpose of appeasing curiosity and gratifying our human interest in our fellow-creatures; history was above all things narrative, and the teaching of lessons or discovery of causes was secondary to the charm of a tale. In this kind there has been nothing so perfect as the entrancing work of Herodotus. At a later and more reflective period history was valued, not only as an interesting narrative, but as a store of moral and political wisdom, the aim consciously avowed and in some measure achieved by Thucydides. Not that a history resembles a cookery-book, or that we can turn over the volumes of the past in the hope of finding a recipe for the present, but that, human nature being a dogged thing and circumstances very monotonous, we may, by reading history which has been intelligently written, augment our tact and improve our sympathetic perception as to what great bodies of men are likely to do and how they may best be guided or at least influenced. But whatever the attraction or the usefulness of history thus written by statesman for statesmen, there is yet another and perhaps a higher aim in writing history, an aim which, if present to the mind of any ancient writer, was present to Polybius alone. This is the purely scientific aim, the endeavour to know what has happened, but still more why it has happened; to understand, in the small degree to which that is possible, the political action of men in other ages or in distant lands. The ablest historians who wrote after the revival of classical studies followed almost timidly in the footsteps of their masters, often excelled in narrative, were sometimes acute in disquisition, but hardly ever attained the severity of a scientific record and explanation of past events. The progressive severance of the contemplative from the active life and of science from literature, characteristic of our own time, produced in the last century a school of historians who adopted this conception of their duty. If we ask how Macaulay conceived of history and how he wrote it, we find in his works traces of all three ideals, but the first and second usually prevail over the third.

Macaulay had a rare gift of narration, and all men love to use the powers in which they excel. Macaulay had steeped himself in antiquity and in the literature inspired by the rediscovery of antique masterpieces. For both reasons we should suspect, what a perusal of his writings confirms, that history is to him above all things narrative. Macaulay was himself, like so many of the Greek and Roman historians, a public man of large capacity and experience. Therefore we might conjecture, what proves to be the case, that he valued history partly as a storehouse of practical wisdom. It is thus that he praised Mill's *History of British India*, for the pains therein taken to trace the progress of sound ideas of government. But we are not left to merely circumstantial evidence to show how Macaulay understood history, for he himself has told us whom he regarded as the masters of history.

"The truth is that I admire no historians much except Herodotus, Thucydides and Tacitus. Perhaps in his way, a very peculiar way, I might add Fra Paolo. The modern writers who have most of the great qualities of the ancient masters of history are some memoir writers; St. Simon for example. There is merit, no doubt, in Hume, Robertson, Voltaire and Gibbon. Yet it is not the thing. I have a conception of history more just, I am confident, than theirs. The execution is another matter. But I hope to improve."

Thus among his favourite historians three belong to antiquity and are men of astonishing literary power. The fourth belongs to the revival of letters, and was in a sense a public man, as were Thucydides and Tacitus. On the other hand Macaulay refers in this context to no modern historian later than the eighteenth century. Among those whom he names, Voltaire had acuteness, if not the painstaking scientific mind, and Gibbon had a great deal of both, was in fact a precursor of the age of science. But these qualities do not seem to have struck Macaulay, nor does he seem to have been aware of the revolution in the study of history which his German contemporaries were making, although he has spoken with all due honour of one of the most distinguished, Ranke. He does not even notice what had been done by the latest and most solid among French historians, such as Guizot. Here we note a deficiency in Macaulay's genius which has already been noticed in another connection. He was not a philosopher, his turn of mind was not analytical, nor did he value knowledge for its own sake as it is valued by the scientific student. He worked hard in amassing the materials for his *History*, but in writing it he was too often swayed, now by the love of literary display, now by the prejudices, the affections and the enmities natural to a public man intent on enforcing sound political doctrine. To say this is not to defame Macaulay, for he must be more than human who could combine the merits of Ranke with the merits of Thucydides and Herodotus.

The nature of scientific history is, indeed, often misunderstood. It is sometimes suggested that the historian should merely collect facts, but the historian will also find himself compelled to interpret them. It is true that he should not write to make out a case for a party or a sect, to multiply illustrations of Whig or Tory principles, to stir up love or hate for Protestant or Catholic. But he cannot even study his subject, much less set forth the result of his studies, unless he has some working hypothesis for his guide. Without such an hypothesis, even in those physical sciences to which hasty critics would assimilate history, we cannot tell what facts to look for, or how to arrange them when found. There is, indeed, no such thing as an intelligible fact apart from the action of the mind upon the world. If we refuse the aid of hypotheses, we shall be crushed by our material. It is in virtue of an hypothesis that we decide some facts to be momentous and others to be trivial, that we take more pains to ascertain principles than uniforms in a civil war, or give more space to the emancipation of a people than to the ceremonies of a drawing-room. It should also be noted that, while in history our sources of information are meagre and untrustworthy compared with our sources of information in natural science, we have in historical study a peculiar, a potent, though a dangerous, instrument not available in the study of nature, the gift of human sympathy. All the particulars that we can collect about Julius Cæsar are few and uncertain compared with the particulars which we can collect about a cheese mite or a grain of sand. But as human beings we know a great deal about human nature, and when we catch a glimpse of our fellow-creatures in remote ages we can divine about them far more than the surviving documents would convey to inquirers of a species above or below humanity. In writing history we must employ hypotheses and must not refuse the illumination of human sympathy. All that can reasonably be exacted from the historian is that his hypotheses should be servants, not masters; that his human sympathy should be more than a narrow affection for those who in other times held or seem to have held the political or religious opinions which he esteems orthodox.

Tried by this reasonable standard Macaulay is often found wanting. Instead of letting the explanation grow out of the facts, he too often forced the facts into the explanation, and this was too often given by the prejudices of his own time and party. He was prone to consult history for illustrations of Whig doctrines and proofs of the final triumph of the Whig polity. He wrote too much as though the whole history of England was a preface to the Act of Catholic Emancipation and the first Reform Act. Although he would have admitted that it did not end there, he seems to have cared so little for what might come after that he never even tried to forecast the political future. We find no hint in any of his published writings of what was clear to his contemporaries, Tocqueville and Carlyle, that the age of democracy was opening, that the middle class, in which he placed so entire a trust, would soon lose to the class below the power which it had won from the class above. And when he turned to the past, although he knew that there had been distant ages in which Whig formulas could not have been applied, he cared too little for those ages ever to understand them thoroughly. He understood the eighteenth century well, the seventeenth not so well, the sixteenth very imperfectly and the centuries before still less.

Macaulay also (the mistake was easy to a public man) ascribed too much to purely political, too little to economic or religious causes. It was thus that in the essay on "Burleigh" he described the French Revolution as "a struggle of the people against princes and nobles for political liberty." It would be readily admitted now that the French Revolution was far more a social and economic than a political upheaval. It was thus that in the essay on "Mackintosh" he narrowed the evolution of the English people almost absolutely to the progress of political freedom. The same bias to politics and to one form of political belief led him both in the *Essays* and in the *History* to dwell at needless length upon the routine of popular government, upon general elections and parliamentary debates and divisions, and to overrate the effect produced by the skill of the party manager or the party orator.

Again Macaulay's range of sympathy and therefore his insight into character is restricted. Something has already been said of the intellectual and moral limitations revealed in many of his judgments upon individuals. Even where he was not biassed, the constitution of his mind led him to sharp antitheses and overcharged statement, and where he was swayed by love or hate the outcome was still worse. Here the memoir writers like St. Simon, whom he so much admired, were hurtful examples, for memoir writing always runs to personalities, and personalities end by making monsters of vice and virtue. We have only to recall the way in which Macaulay sets Strafford against Hampden, Pope against Addison and James II. against William of Orange to see how far a shrewd and honest man may be misled in this direction. Even where there was no contrast to be enforced, the love of that completeness which is almost unknown in human nature led Macaulay to elaborate out of slight materials the accomplished hero like Lord Peterborough or the unqualified villain like Sir Elijah Impey. If now and then Macaulay admits of inconsistency in the character of a public man, that inconsistency is heightened and enforced until the man is well-nigh cut in two. In short, Macaulay's treatment of character is too commonly rhetorical, and this is a very serious fault in any kind of historical writing, for the object of the orator is to gain a verdict either of condemnation or of acquittal, whereas the object of the historian is merely to understand.

But Macaulay's experience as a public man was an advantage in dealing with historical facts which almost outweighed his infirmities as a man of science. At the present day the enormous volume of accessible material and the severe standard of accuracy enforced compel the man who would write history to spend his life a recluse in libraries and in record offices. Only a man of peculiar temperament can endure this prolonged and solitary toil, which in turn accentuates his peculiarities. Such a historian is apt to lose in the sense for reality and in comprehension of his fellow-creatures what he gains in exhaustive and precise knowledge of documents. Too often his works savour of the cloister. He has never watched the wheels of State in operation, he has never been familiar with statesmen, he has never studied or manipulated great masses of human beings. It would not be difficult to name works produced in recent years by historians of this class which contain an immense store of facts, but give no sense of reality. In such works the very personages most minutely depicted do not seem alive; they elude our grasp like the inhabitants of the classical Hades; they had, we learn, opinions and they performed actions, but they can never have been men and women like those who now inhabit the earth. Such books are often encumbered with theories about past political events which any public man in any age would instinctively feel to be artificial and flimsy, or with strategic theories which would make a soldier smile. Books of this class may be serviceable to the student who knows how to extract materials from them, but they are not histories in the proper sense. It may well be doubted whether any man can write satisfactorily about any form of practical activity which he has not tried for himself, or be a consummate writer of political history without some experience of political life.

Macaulay had gained this political experience; he knew something of the temper of the multitude; he was familiar with parliamentary debate and with cabinet councils; he had presided over a public office and had drawn up laws for an empire. Public affairs had been his business, and accordingly he wrote about the public affairs of another age as about things which he had touched and handled. The incalculable advantage which the statesman has over the professor in this respect cannot be better seen than by contrasting his *History* with Ranke's *History of England in the Seventeenth Century*. Ranke was a far more disinterested student; he had larger sympathies, a calmer and more judicial mind; he was heir to all the contemplative wisdom of the great age of Germany; and yet with all these advantages how dim, how lifeless, how difficult to read, how impossible to remember is Ranke's description of even the most stirring crises in parliamentary history, of the fierce debates on the Exclusion Bill or the final struggles in the Convention! Whereas Macaulay's description of such incidents makes the least partisan of readers feel as though he hung upon the debate and listened anxiously for the result of the division. No doubt Macaulay was by nature more excitable and more eloquent than Ranke. But what made most difference was that the English citizen of the seventeenth century was to Ranke no more than the specimen of an extinct animal in a museum is to the zoologist, a thing curious to contemplate, hard to reconstruct and impossible to revivify, but to Macaulay was an actual man, more or less like Mr. Croker or Lord Althorp, more or less like the electors of Leeds or of Edinburgh, a man whose heart was heard beating through the thin partition of time, a man so close to ourselves that the only difficult thing was to judge him with equanimity. This eager sense of life and reality has its own dangers, and, as we have already seen, led Macaulay into many mistakes; and yet without it patient research and analytical power produce no history which can satisfy our reasonable expectation. A perfect history we can hardly hope to see, for it would imply the union of qualities very rare and commonly opposed to each other; a creative imagination and a critical reason.

When we come to consider Macaulay's historical essays one by one we find that the later are generally superior to the earlier essays. This progress was due partly to the maturing effect of time upon his talent, partly to his increasing absorption in historical study, and partly to a more judicious choice of subjects. Among the essays written before Macaulay went to India the best is probably the essay on "Machiavelli." The subject was such that the bias of English party could affect its treatment only indirectly and to a very slight degree. As the scope of the essay was too wide to allow of much detail, it contains few inaccuracies of any consequence, whilst its train of thought is novel and suggestive. The essay on "Mirabeau" has all Macaulay's faults and few of his merits. The essays upon subjects taken from English history before the Restoration are decidedly inferior to the essay on "Machiavelli." Macaulay had access only to a small part of the materials for the history of that period; for the mass of the State papers of our own and of foreign countries then lay unarranged and unexplored and could have been rendered available only by long years of toil. These essays, therefore, are thin. The essay on "Lord Burleigh" audaciously dismisses the minister in a few paragraphs to discuss the general problem of religious toleration, more interesting to the author and to his readers. The essay on "Hampden" is little more than a panegyric and not in Macaulay's best manner. Even the essay on "Hallam's *Constitutional History*," a more ambitious effort, betrays at every turn that the writer is not steeped in the thought and feeling of the time of Charles I. and the Commonwealth. Roundheads and Cavaliers are to him merely Whigs and Tories in old-fashioned garb and of old-fashioned speech. The essay on the "War of the Spanish Succession" belongs to that period which has been indicated as Macaulay's own, and is written with great spirit; but Macaulay, like all contemporary historians, seems to have been deluded by his trust in the *Memoirs* of Captain Carleton. The political half of the essay on "Walpole" is excellent although too highly coloured, and the first essay on "Pitt," despite some blemishes, is a powerful and instructive piece of historical writing.

The two very long essays which Macaulay wrote while in India are on different grounds unsatisfactory. The historical half of the essay on "Bacon," although not at all so poor a performance as Bacon's apologists would have us believe, still betrays the writer's imperfect sympathy with the men and the ideas of that age. The essay upon "Mackintosh's *History of the Revolution*" is spread over too undefined a field, and having no hero is not suited to display Macaulay's powers at their best. But the essays written after his return from India are for the most part admirable specimens of his peculiar talent. The essays upon subjects taken from foreign history are indeed inferior to the rest. The essay on "Barère" breathes, indeed, Macaulay's wholesome abhorrence of a rascal, but does not attest any remarkable insight into the French Revolution. The essay on "Ranke's *History of the Popes*" contains a few brilliant sketches, but fails, as we have already said, because the subject required a more serious and philosophic treatment. The essay on "Frederic the Great," lively and graphic as it is, is injured by mistakes which were the fault less of the writer than of the time, and by a defect of insight into continental politics which was the fault of the writer. But the essay on "Sir William Temple" is full of matter and most enjoyable to read. The essay on "Clive" is a masterpiece of biography in a small compass, correct in all essential particulars, singularly bold and impressive, and animated with an enthusiasm which yet does not ignore the laws of truth and integrity. The essay on "Warren Hastings," still finer as literature, has suffered irreparable injury from modern criticism. Yet the two remain even now the only popular studies of the history of the English in India, and whoever wishes to acquaint himself with that history must still be advised to read Macaulay by way of introduction. The second essay upon "Pitt," one of the most correct, impressive and dignified, worthily closes the series.

If, in conclusion, we ask what is the distinctive merit of Macaulay's historical essays, the merit which redeems imperfect knowledge, superficial philosophy and overheated eloquence, it might be answered that these essays are admirable specimens of popular writing in the noblest acceptation. Books which try to make history popular too often sink into silliness or vulgarity. But these essays, which have done more than any other book to kindle the desire for historical knowledge in myriads of young and untrained, or busy and preoccupied minds, are not written down to the nursery or the market-place. They are the free outflow of an active and richly stored intelligence. They maintain the dignity of their themes. They do not try to bring great men and great events within the reach of common minds by making them common. They are not stuck full of cant phrases and trite quotations or interlarded with vulgar pleasantry. It is the scholar and the statesman who speaks, and if the partisan too often speaks also, he is an orator who addresses a senate, not a ranter who amuses a crowd. To these merits much gratitude is due and many faults may be pardoned. As time goes on the imperfections of these essays will be more clearly seen and more generally recognised, but it is not likely that they will cease to be read. For we cannot name another book in all the wide range of English literature which displays their peculiar excellence in the same degree, and it is not freedom from faults, but the possession of unique qualities, which causes books as well as men to be held in living remembrance.

MACAULAY'S ESSAYS

MILTON

August, 1825

NOTE ON THE ESSAY

IT would be unfair to a great writer to take this essay too seriously when he has himself told us that it contains scarcely a paragraph such as his mature judgment approved. The essay on Milton is the work of a clever, eager, combative youth, full of enthusiasm for literature and liberty, but hardly yet comprehending that there are such excellences as measure and discrimination. "A reader," Arnold observes, "who only wants rhetoric, a reader who wants a panegyric on Milton, a panegyric on the Puritans, will find what he wants. A reader who wants criticism will be disappointed." Macaulay's curious want of subtlety is nowhere more fully exemplified than in his discussion of the influence of advancing civilisation upon poetic genius. His crude assertion that as civilisation progresses poetry almost necessarily declines would imply that the finest poetry can only be produced in a state of the lowest barbarism. This is certainly not the case. The people among whom the Homeric poems took shape were by no means savages. The Attic dramas were produced for the most civilised community of the ancient world. Lucretius and Virgil wrote in the capital of civilised Europe. The dark ages were comparatively unfruitful of poetry, which only bloomed again in the reviving civilisation of the eleventh and succeeding centuries. Dante's contemporaries were not barbarians. Shakespeare's contemporaries were almost as civilised as Milton's. We need not multiply later instances to prove that a great deal of exquisite poetry may be produced in periods of the highest civilisation. If we turn from the mere enumeration of instances to reasoning upon the nature of poetry we see that the problem is far more complex than Macaulay imagined. A national legend, indeed, can only be evolved in the youth of a nation. But the fulness of thought and feeling manifested by the greatest epic and tragic poets must be the outcome of a long experience requiring the lapse of many generations. Language is usually more direct and sensuous among semi-civilised than among civilised men. But the faultless elegance of Virgil, or the amazing compass and flexibility of

Shakespeare, could never be attained in the speech of genuine barbarians. Macaulay thinks the credulity of the child or the savage more favourable to poetry than the scepticism of the adult or of civilised people. But then it may be urged that implicit belief is altogether distinct from imaginative enjoyment, that we really enjoy poetry because we know that it is not a record of fact. To take all these objections is not to deny the possibility that civilisation may in some respects weaken, or in some cases destroy, the faculty of poetic creation; it only implies that Macaulay did not see how intricate the problem is, and therefore has left it unsolved.

Macaulay, we have said, had generally a true sense of what is great in literature. His wide classical reading and powerful memory enabled him to measure Milton's wonderful power of assimilation. His remarks upon the early poems and the sonnets contain much that is true and happily expressed. Perhaps the best critical remarks in the essay are those upon the singular suggestive power of Milton's language and rhythm. It is harder to follow Macaulay where he praises Milton's treatment of spiritual beings. Many will think that the frequent introduction of Omnipotence among the personages of an epic throws all inferior beings out of scale and paralyses action. In this respect we may feel that Milton was misled by his respect for the classical epics in which deities of very finite power and wisdom are such constant actors, and by the theological disposition to strip all mystery from Divine Providence. Satan, as at first introduced, is a grand conception, but the poet could not, or would not, keep him at the same altitude throughout. He begins as the heroic rebel against absolute power, with whom the poet unconsciously sympathises; he ends as the commonplace fiend, sufficiently employed in perverting weak and foolish mortals. Macaulay might have been more sensitive to these imperfections had he not been reared himself in a Puritan atmosphere. But for that circumstance he might have realised the most comprehensive objection to *Paradise Lost*, that notwithstanding its finished art throughout and the incomparable splendour of many passages, it is as a whole difficult and almost repellent to the majority even of those readers who have cultivated an appreciation of poetry.

What Macaulay says of Milton's prose writings is true so far as it goes, but it is only a portion of the truth. They do contain passages compared with which the finest declamations of Burke sink into insignificance, but these passages are usually outbreaks of the poetic soul, little connected with their context, which is too often wearisome and unprofitable. Milton's pamphlets display neither the lucid method and close argument of Swift nor the ample knowledge and varied reflection of Burke. Milton's zeal was pure, but his knowledge of the world was small, and his acquaintance with politics almost nothing. His learning, although less than Macaulay suggests, was far greater than a pamphleteer needs to make an impression, but it was sterilised by use in controversy. His fiery temper and the unseemly fashion of the learned world often misled him into an abusive style which disgusts the modern reader. For these reasons the simple-minded person who turns from Macaulay's essay to Milton's pamphlets is likely to sustain some rude shocks of disappointment which may hinder his recognising the lofty purpose which redeems their faults and the superb genius which ever and anon breaking through common argument or invective, raises them into classics and renders them immortal.

As the political and historical opinions expressed in this essay are similar to those much better expressed in some of the later essays, we need not pause to discuss them here.

If we turn from the matter to the language of this essay we note that Macaulay had already formed his style. Although he himself described the essay on Milton as overloaded with gaudy and ungraceful ornament, the structure of the sentences and the choice of words are already such as we find them in the essay on Addison or in the *History of England*. Certainly the style is that of a young man, but Macaulay, for better or worse, remained a young man all his life. A certain unskilfulness in transitions from one topic to another and a disproportionate length in digressions are very noticeable here, but are sometimes found even in his latest essays.

In Professor Masson's monumental *Life* all that can be known concerning Milton has been collected and set forth with the utmost industry. Mark Pattison's volume in *English Men of Letters* is eminently acute and sympathetic in criticism. Among recent studies of Milton Professor Raleigh's is perhaps the most brilliant and attractive.

MILTON

Joannis Miltoni, Angli, de Doctrinâ Christianâ libri duo posthumi. A Treatise on Christian Doctrine, compiled from the Holy Scriptures alone. By JOHN MILTON, translated from the Original by Charles R. Sumner, M.A. &c. &c. 1825.

TOWARDS the close of the year 1823, Mr. Lemon,[1] deputy keeper of the state papers, in the course of his researches among the presses of his office, met with a large Latin manuscript. With it were found corrected copies of the foreign despatches written by Milton while he filled the office of Secretary,[2] and several papers relating to the Popish Trials[3] and the Rye-house Plot.[4] The whole was wrapped up in an envelope, superscribed *To Mr. Skinner, Merchant.* On examination, the large manuscript proved to be the long lost Essay on the Doctrines of Christianity, which, according to Wood[5] and Toland,[6]

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[1] Robert Lemon, 1779-1835, became a clerk in the State Paper Office in 1795, and Deputy Keeper in the same office in 1818. Besides discovering the *De Doctrinâ Christianâ*, he did much in arranging the national records and preparing them for publication.

[2] In March, 1649, Milton was appointed Latin Secretary to the Council of State, the supreme executive authority of the Commonwealth. He continued to hold this office till within some months of the Restoration, his latest Latin letter being dated the 16th May, 1659.

[3] These trials followed upon the information given in 1678 by Titus Oates and others of a Roman Catholic plot to murder the King and overturn the constitution in Church and State. Although the information was false, it terrified the public, and many persons were executed as conspirators.

[4] When the dissolution of the Oxford Parliament (see below) and the reaction against the excesses of the Whigs had freed Charles II. from restraint, many of the Whigs, despairing of constitutional resistance, began to conspire. Richard Rumbold, an old Parliamentary soldier, and some others laid a plan to capture or kill the King on his way to London from Newmarket. The spot chosen for the attack was close by Rumbold's dwelling, known as the Rye House, which has given its name to the plot.

[5] Anthony Wood, 1632-1695, the celebrated Oxford antiquary and diarist. The passage to which Macaulay refers will be found in his *Fasti Oxonienses*, part i., col. 486 (ed. 1817).

[6] John Toland, 1670-1722, who is now remembered chiefly as the first exponent of the deism of the eighteenth century, wrote a *Life of Milton* which was prefixed to the edition of Milton's prose writings, published in 1698.

Milton finished after the Restoration, and deposited with Cyriac Skinner.[1] Skinner, it is well known, held the same political opinions with his illustrious friend. It is therefore probable, as Mr. Lemon conjectures, that he may have fallen under the suspicions of the government during that persecution of the Whigs which followed the dissolution of the Oxford parliament,[2] and that, in consequence of a general seizure of his papers, this work may have been brought to the office in which it has been found. But whatever the adventures of the manuscript may have been, no doubt can exist that it is a genuine relic of the great poet.

Mr. Sumner,[3] who was commanded by his Majesty to edite and translate the treatise, has acquitted himself of his task in a manner honourable to his talents and to his character. His version is not indeed very easy or elegant; but it is entitled to the praise of clearness and fidelity. His notes abound with interesting quotations, and have the rare merit of really elucidating the text. The preface is evidently the work of a sensible and candid man, firm in his own religious opinions, and tolerant towards those of others.

The book itself will not add much to the fame of Milton. It is, like all his Latin works, well written, though not exactly in the style of the prize essays of Oxford and Cambridge. There is no elaborate imitation of classical antiquity, no scrupulous purity, none of the ceremonial cleanness which characterizes the diction of our academical Pharisees. The author does not attempt to polish and brighten his composition into the Ciceronian gloss and brilliancy. He does not, in short, sacrifice sense and spirit to pedantic refinements. The nature of his subject compelled him to use many words

"That would have made Quintilian stare and gasp."[4]

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[1] A pupil and friend to whom Milton addressed two of his sonnets.

[2] The last Parliament of Charles II., and the last held anywhere but at Westminster, met at Oxford on the 21st of March, 1681. The Whig leaders were about to reintroduce the bill for excluding James, Duke of York, from the succession, as being a Roman Catholic, when Charles, trusting to the change of feeling in the country, dissolved the Parliament a few days after it had assembled.

[3] Charles Richard Sumner, 1790-1874, was appointed historiographer to the Crown and royal librarian in 1820. He thus was chosen to edit the *De Doctrinâ Christianâ.* He afterwards became Bishop of Llandaff, whence he was translated to Winchester.

[4] "Those rugged names to our like mouths grow sleek
That would have made Quintilian stare and gasp."
—MILTON, sonnet xi.

Marcus Fabius Quintilianus, A.D. 35-95, although a Spaniard by birth, was the best Latin critic and one of the most elegant Latin writers of the imperial epoch. His great work was the *Institutio Oratoria.*

But he writes with as much ease and freedom as if Latin were his mother tongue; and, where he is least happy, his failure seems to arise from the carelessness of a native, not from the ignorance of a foreigner. We may apply to him what Denham[1] with great felicity says of Cowley.[2] He wears the garb, but not the clothes of the ancients.

Throughout the volume are discernible the traces of a powerful and independent mind, emancipated from the influence of authority, and devoted to the search of truth. Milton professes to form his system from the Bible alone; and his digest of scriptural texts is certainly among the best that have appeared. But he is not always so happy in his inferences as in his citations.

Some of the heterodox doctrines which he avows seem to have excited considerable amazement, particularly his Arianism,[3] and his theory on the subject of polygamy.[4] Yet we can scarcely conceive that any person could have read the Paradise Lost without suspecting him of the former; nor do we think that any reader, acquainted with the history of his life, ought to be much startled at the latter. The opinions which he has expressed respecting the nature of the Deity, the eternity of matter, and the observation of the Sabbath, might, we think, have caused more just surprise.[1]

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[1] "Horace's wit and Virgil's state
He did not steal, but emulate:
And when he would like them appear
Their garb but not their clothes did wear."

—"On Mr. Abraham Cowley's Death and Burial amongst the Ancient Poets."

John Denham, Sir, 1615-1669, whose poems, once famous, are now almost entirely forgotten with the exception of four lines in his *Cooper's Hill*, alluding to the Thames:—

"O could I flow like thee and make thy stream
My great example as it is my theme,
Though deep, yet clear; though gentle yet not dull,
Strong without rage, without o'erflowing full."

[2] Abraham Cowley, 1618-1667, the most distinguished of that school of poets known as the "metaphysical" (*i.e.*, remarkable for ingenious conceits and far-fetched expressions) which flourished under James I. and Charles I.

[3] The Arian doctrine that the Son was not co-equal or co-eternal with the Father is adopted in Milton's treatise above referred to, but it seems, as Macaulay says, to be implied in various passages of *Paradise Lost*, especially book v., line 600 *et seq.*

[4] Milton's opinions concerning marriage are stated in several pamphlets, *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*, 1643; *The Judgment of Martin Bucer Concerning Divorce*, 1644; *Tetrachordon, Expositions upon the Four Chief Places in Scripture which Treat of Marriage*, 1645; and *Colasterion, A Reply to a Nameless Answer against the Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*, 1645. According to his nephew, Edward Phillips, Milton, when his first wife, Mary Powell, left him and refused to return, thought of taking a substitute. But if this were so, his reconciliation with his wife changed his mind. To this statement Macaulay seems to refer.

But we will not go into the discussion of these points. The book, were it far more orthodox or far more heretical than it is, would not much edify or corrupt the present generation. The men of our time are not to be converted or perverted by quartos. A few more days, and this essay will follow the *Defensio Populi* to the dust and silence of the upper shelf.[2] The name of its author, and the remarkable circumstances attending its publication, will secure to it a certain degree of attention. For a month or two it will occupy a few minutes of chat in every drawing-room, and a few columns in every magazine; and it will then, to borrow the elegant language of the play-bills, be withdrawn to make room for the forthcoming novelties.

We wish however to avail ourselves of the interest, transient as it may be, which this work has excited. The dexterous Capuchins[3] never choose to preach on the life and miracles of a saint, until they have awakened the devotional feelings of their auditors by exhibiting some relic of him, a thread of his garment, a lock of his hair, or a drop of his blood. On the same principle, we intend to take advantage of the late interesting discovery, and, while this memorial of a great and good man is still in the hands of all, to say something of his moral and intellectual qualities. Nor, we are convinced, will the severest of our readers blame us if, on an occasion like the present, we turn for a short time from the topics of the day, to commemorate, in all love and reverence, the genius and virtues of John Milton, the poet, the statesman, the philosopher, the glory of English literature, the champion and the martyr of English liberty.[4]

It is by his poetry that Milton is best known; and it is of his poetry that we wish first to speak. By the general suffrage of the civilised world, his place has been assigned among the greatest masters of the art. His detractors, however, though outvoted, have not been silenced. There are many critics, and some of great name, who contrive in the same breath to extol the poems and to decry the poet. The works they acknowledge, considered in themselves, may be classed among the noblest productions of the human mind. But they will not allow the author to rank with those great men who, born in the infancy of civilisation, supplied, by their own powers, the want of instruction, and, though destitute of models themselves, bequeathed to posterity models which defy imitation. Milton, it is said, inherited what his predecessors created; he lived in an enlightened age; he received a finished education, and we must therefore, if we would form a just estimate of his powers, make large deductions in consideration of these advantages.

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[1] In the *De Doctrinâ Christianâ* Milton inclines to a somewhat anthropomorphic conception of the Deity. He holds that the world was not created out of nothing, and he denies that the ordinance of the Sabbath is binding on Christians.

[2] In March, 1651, Milton published his *Pro Populo Anglicano Defensio*, a reply to the *Defensio Regia* written by the learned Salmasius (Claude Saumaise) in vindication of Charles I. and in denunciation of those who put him to death. Both pamphlets were in Latin and so much disfigured with scurrility as to be now offensive.

[3] The Capuchins, so styled from their hoods (Ital. *cappuccio*), were a branch of the Franciscans erected into a separate order by Clement VII. in 1528. They have been distinguished by their energy as preachers and missionaries.

[4] Milton was assuredly the glory of English literature and the champion of English liberty, but certainly not a statesman, scarcely a philosopher and only a martyr in the sense in which every earnest adherent of a vanquished party may be so termed.

We venture to say, on the contrary, paradoxical as the remark may appear, that no poet has ever had to struggle with more unfavourable circumstances than Milton.[1] He doubted, as he has himself owned, whether he had not been born "an age too late."[2] For this notion Johnson[3] has thought fit to make him the butt of much clumsy ridicule. The poet, we believe, understood the nature of his art better than the critic. He knew that his poetical genius derived no advantage from the civilisation which surrounded him, or from the learning which he had acquired; and he looked back with something like regret to the ruder age of simple words and vivid impressions.

We think that, as civilisation advances, poetry almost necessarily declines. Therefore, though we fervently admire those great works of imagination which have appeared in dark ages, we do not admire them the more because they have appeared in dark ages. On the contrary, we hold that the most wonderful and splendid proof of genius is a great poem produced in a civilised age. We cannot understand why those who believe in that most orthodox article of literary faith, that the earliest poets are generally the best, should wonder at the rule as if it were the exception. Surely the uniformity of the phænomenon indicates a corresponding uniformity in the cause.

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[1] It is not clear, even if we admit Macaulay's theory, why Milton should have had to struggle with more unfavourable circumstances than the great poets of a later time who lived in a still more highly civilised society.

[2] "unless an age too late, or cold
Climate, or years, damp my intended wing
Depressed—"
—*Paradise Lost*, book ix., lines 44-46.

[3] Johnson, "Life of Milton."

The fact is, that common observers reason from the progress of the experimental sciences to that of the imitative arts. The improvement of the former is gradual and slow. Ages are spent in collecting materials, ages more in separating and combining them. Even when a system has been formed, there is still something to add, to alter, or to reject. Every generation enjoys the use of a vast hoard bequeathed to it by antiquity, and transmits that hoard, augmented by fresh acquisitions, to future ages. In these pursuits, therefore, the first speculators lie under great disadvantages, and, even when they fail, are entitled to praise. Their pupils, with far inferior intellectual powers, speedily surpass them in actual attainments. Every girl who has read Mrs. Marcet's[1] little dialogues on Political Economy could teach Montague[2] or Walpole[3] many lessons in finance. Any intelligent man may now, by resolutely applying himself for a few years to mathematics, learn more than the great Newton knew after half a century of study and meditation.

But it is not thus with music, with painting, or with sculpture. Still less is it thus with poetry. The progress of refinement rarely supplies these arts with better objects of imitation. It may indeed improve the instruments which are necessary to the mechanical operations of the musician, the sculptor, and the painter. But language, the machine of the poet, is best fitted for his purpose in its rudest state. Nations, like individuals, first perceive, and then abstract. They advance from particular images to general terms. Hence the vocabulary of an enlightened society is philosophical, that of a half-civilised people is poetical.

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[1] Jane Haldimand, 1769-1858, married in 1799 Dr. Alexander Marcet. Her *Conversations on Political Economy*, published in 1816, and intended to serve as an elementary text-book, passed through many editions and called forth the praise of such authorities as J. B. Say and McCulloch.

[2] Charles Montagu, Earl of Halifax 1661-1715, first attracted notice by a parody of Dryden's *Hind and Panther*, entitled the *Country Mouse and the City Mouse*, written jointly by him and Prior. He entered the House of Commons in 1689, and soon became a leader of the Whigs. He was made a Lord of the Treasury in 1692, and Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1694. He took the chief part in commencing the National Debt, founding the Bank of England and reforming the currency. In 1699 he resigned his office and next year he was called to the Upper House as Baron Halifax. He was impeached without success in 1701. In 1714 he was raised to the rank of an earl. As a patron of letters he was ridiculed by Pope under the name of Bufo. As a financier he was one of the greatest in English history.

[3] Robert Walpole, Sir, 1676-1745, rose to be First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1715. After a brief exclusion from power he regained these offices and was virtually Prime Minister between 1721 and 1742. Walpole had neither the opportunities nor the daring temper of Montague. His improvements in the tariff, however, and his Excise scheme, defeated by party malice, entitle him to honourable rank as a financier.

This change in the language of men is partly the cause and partly the effect of a corresponding change in the nature of their intellectual operations, of a change by which science gains and poetry loses. Generalisation is necessary to the advancement of knowledge; but particularity is indispensable to the creations of the imagination. In proportion as men know more and think more, they look less at individuals and more at classes. They therefore make better theories and worse poems. They give us vague phrases instead of images, and personified qualities instead of men. They may be better able to analyse human nature than their predecessors. But analysis is not the business of the poet. His office is to portray, not to dissect. He may believe in a moral sense, like Shaftesbury;[1] he may refer all human actions to self-interest, like Helvetius;[2] or he may never think about the matter at all. His creed on such subjects will no more influence his poetry, properly so called, than the notions which a painter may have conceived respecting the lacrymal glands, or the circulation of the blood will affect the tears of his Niobe, or the blushes of his Aurora. If Shakespeare had written a book on the motives of human actions, it is by no means certain that it would have been a good one. It is extremely improbable that it would have contained half so much able reasoning on the subject as is to be found in the Fable of the Bees. But could Mandeville[3] have created an Iago? Well as he knew how to resolve characters into their elements, would he have been able to combine those elements in such a manner as to make up a man, a real, living, individual man?

Perhaps no person can be a poet, or can even enjoy poetry, without a certain unsoundness of mind, if any thing which gives so much pleasure ought to be called unsoundness. By poetry we mean not all writing in verse, nor even all good writing in verse. Our definition excludes many metrical compositions which, on other grounds, deserve the highest praise. By poetry we mean the art of employing words in such a manner as to produce an illusion on the imagination, the art of doing by means of words what the painter does by means of colours. Thus the greatest of poets has described it, in lines universally admired for the vigour and felicity of their diction, and still more valuable on account of the just notion which they convey of the art in which he excelled:

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[1] Anthony Ashley Cooper, the third Earl of Shaftesbury, 1671-1713, distinguished himself as a moral philosopher. He defined the moral sense as "a real antipathy or aversion to injustice and wrong and affection or love towards equity and right for its own sake and on account of its own natural beauty and worth" (*Inquiry Concerning Virtue*, book i., part iii., section i.).

[2] Claude-Adrien Helvetius, 1715-1771, taught in his famous work *De l'Esprit*, that all our faculties are reducible to sensation, and that interest (the desire of pleasure and the fear of pain) is the only guide of human action.

[3] Bernard Mandeville, 1670-1733, wrote the *Fable of the Bees* to prove that private vices were public benefits, or, at least, that there would be no civilisation if men had no unreasonable appetites.

> "As imagination bodies forth
> The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
> Turns them to shape, and gives to airy nothing
> A local habitation and a name."[1]

These are the fruits of the "fine frenzy" which he ascribes to the poet,—a fine frenzy doubtless, but still a frenzy. Truth, indeed, is essential to poetry; but it is the truth of madness. The reasonings are just; but the premises are false. After the first suppositions have been made, every thing ought to be consistent; but those first suppositions require a degree of credulity which almost amounts to a partial and temporary derangement of the intellect. Hence of all people children are the most imaginative. They abandon themselves without reserve to every illusion. Every image which is strongly presented to their mental eye produces on them the effect of reality. No man, whatever his sensibility may be, is ever affected by Hamlet or Lear, as a little girl is affected by the story of poor Red Riding-hood. She knows that it is all false, that wolves cannot speak, that there are no wolves in England. Yet in spite of her knowledge she believes; she weeps; she trembles; she dares not go into a dark room lest she should feel the teeth of the monster at her throat. Such is the despotism of the imagination over uncultivated minds.

In a rude state of society men are children with a greater variety of ideas. It is therefore in such a state of society that we may expect to find the poetical temperament in its highest perfection. In an enlightened age there will be much intelligence, much science, much philosophy, abundance of just classification and subtle analysis, abundance of wit and eloquence, abundance of verses, and even of good ones; but little poetry. Men will judge and compare; but they will not create. They will talk about the old poets, and comment on them, and to a certain degree enjoy them. But they will scarcely be able to conceive the effect which poetry produced on their ruder ancestors, the agony, the ecstasy, the plenitude of belief. The Greek Rhapsodists,[1] according to Plato, could scarce recite Homer without falling into convulsions. The Mohawk hardly feels the scalping knife while he shouts his death-song. The power which the ancient bards of Wales and Germany exercised over their auditors seems to modern readers almost miraculous. Such feelings are very rare in a civilised community, and most rare among those who participate most in its improvements. They linger longest among the peasantry.

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[1] "Midsummer Night's Dream," act v., scene I.

Poetry produces an illusion on the eye of the mind, as a magic lantern produces an illusion on the eye of the body. And, as the magic lantern acts best in a dark room, poetry effects its purpose most completely in a dark age. As the light of knowledge breaks in upon its exhibitions, as the outlines of certainty become more and more definite and the shades of probability more and more distinct, the hues and lineaments of the phantoms which the poet calls up grow fainter and fainter. We cannot unite the incompatible advantages of reality and deception, the clear discernment of truth and the exquisite enjoyment of fiction.

He who, in an enlightened and literary society, aspires to be a great poet, must first become a little child. He must take to pieces the whole web of his mind. He must unlearn much of that knowledge which has perhaps constituted hitherto his chief title to superiority. His very talents will be a hindrance to him. His difficulties will be proportioned to his proficiency in the pursuits which are fashionable among his contemporaries; and that proficiency will in general be proportioned to the vigour and activity of his mind. And it is well if, after all his sacrifices and exertions, his works do not resemble a lisping man or a modern ruin. We have seen in our own time great talents, intense labour, and long meditation, employed in this struggle against the spirit of the age, and employed, we will not say absolutely in vain, but with dubious success and feeble applause.

If these reasonings be just, no poet has ever triumphed over greater difficulties than Milton. He received a learned education: he was a profound and elegant classical scholar: he had studied all the mysteries of Rabbinical literature:[1] he was intimately acquainted with every language of modern Europe, from which either pleasure or information was then to be derived.[2] He was perhaps the only great poet of later times who has been distinguished by the excellence of his Latin verse. The genius of Petrarch was scarcely of the first order; and his poems in the ancient language, though much praised by those who have never read them, are wretched compositions.[3] Cowley, with all his admirable wit and ingenuity, had little imagination: nor indeed do we think his classical diction comparable to that of Milton. The authority of Johnson is against us on this point.[4] But Johnson had studied the bad writers of the middle ages till he had become utterly insensible to the Augustan elegance, and was as ill qualified to judge between two Latin styles as a habitual drunkard to set up for a wine-taster.

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[1] The Greek Rhapsodists were professional reciters of the epic poems, who accompanied themselves on the lyre. Macaulay here refers to the Io of Plato, professedly a dialogue between Socrates and one of these rhapsodists.

Versification in a dead language is an exotic, a far-fetched, costly, sickly, imitation of that which elsewhere may be found in healthful and spontaneous perfection.[5] The soils on which this rarity flourishes are in general as ill suited to the production of vigorous native poetry as the flower-pots of a hot-house to the growth of oaks. That the author of the Paradise Lost should have written the Epistle to Manso[6] was truly wonderful. Never before were such marked originality and such exquisite mimicry found together. Indeed in all the Latin poems of Milton the artificial manner indispensable to such works is admirably preserved, while, at the same time, his genius gives to them a peculiar charm, an air of nobleness and freedom, which distinguishes them from all other writings of the same class. They remind us of the amusements of those angelic warriors who composed the cohort of Gabriel:

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[1] This is a rhetorical way of saying that Milton knew Hebrew. A more judicial estimate of Milton's learning is given by Mark Pattison in his "Life of Milton" (*English Men of Letters Series*), p. 210.

[2] Did Milton know Spanish?

[3] Francesco Petrarca, 1304-1374, the illustrious poet, was a devout worshipper of antiquity, and tried to revive the study of Latin and Greek literature. He diligently cultivated a classical Latin style in prose and verse. Hallam passes a more favourable judgment than Macaulay's on Petrarch's Latin poems (*Literature of Europe*, part i., ch. i.).

[4] "The products of his vernal fertility have been surpassed by many poets, particularly by his contemporary, Cowley" ("Life of Milton").

[5] But Latin was scarcely a dead language in the first half of the seventeenth century. It was habitually written and spoken by the learned class in civilised Europe. See Professor Masson's remarks on this subject in his Introduction to Milton's Latin poems: "I should say that the expectation of coequality between the intrinsic worth of the Latin poetry of any educated Englishman of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and the intrinsic worth of the same writer's English poetry, if he wrote any, is the proper rule in the examination of any specimens of the forgotten Anglo-Latin poetry of that period" (*Milton's Poetical Works*, edited by D. Masson, vol. i., p. 249).

[6] Giovanni Battista Manso, Marquess of Villa, 1561-1645, a Neapolitan nobleman of high and amiable character and many accomplishments, the friend of Tasso and Marini, and himself an author, showed peculiar courtesy to Milton when he visited Naples in 1638. Milton, before quitting Naples, returned him thanks in a poetic epistle.

> "About him exercised heroic games
> The unarmed youth of heaven. But o'er their heads
> Celestial armoury, shield, helm, and spear,
> Hung high, with diamond flaming and with gold." [1]

We cannot look upon the sportive exercises for which the genius of Milton ungirds itself, without catching a glimpse of the gorgeous and terrible panoply which it is accustomed to wear. The strength of his imagination triumphed over every obstacle. So intense and ardent was the fire of his mind, that it not only was not suffocated beneath the weight of fuel, but penetrated the whole superincumbent mass with its own heat and radiance.

It is not our intention to attempt any thing like a complete examination of the poetry of Milton. The public has long been agreed as to the merit of the most remarkable passages, the incomparable harmony of the numbers, and the excellence of that style, which no rival has been able to equal, and no parodist to degrade, which displays in their highest perfection the idiomatic powers of the English tongue, and to which every ancient and every modern language has contributed something of grace, of energy, or of music. In the vast field of criticism on which we are entering, innumerable reapers have already put their sickles. Yet the harvest is so abundant that the negligent search of a straggling gleaner may be rewarded with a sheaf.

The most striking characteristic of the poetry of Milton is the extreme remoteness of the associations by means of which it acts on the reader. Its effect is produced, not so much by what it expresses, as by what it suggests; not so much by the ideas which it directly conveys, as by other ideas which are connected with them. He electrifies the mind through conductors. The most unimaginative man must understand the Iliad. Homer gives him no choice, and requires from him no exertion, but takes the whole upon himself, and sets the images in so clear a light, that it is impossible to be blind to them. The works of Milton cannot be comprehended or enjoyed, unless the mind of the reader co-operate with that of the writer. He does not paint a finished picture, or play for a mere passive listener. He sketches, and leaves others to fill up the outline. He strikes the key-note, and expects his hearer to make out the melody.

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[1] *Paradise Lost*, book iv., lines 551-554.

We often hear of the magical influence of poetry. The expression in general means nothing: but, applied to the writings of Milton, it is most appropriate. His poetry acts like an incantation. Its merit lies less in its obvious meaning than in its occult power. There would seem, at first sight, to be no more in his words than in other words. But they are words of enchantment. No sooner are they pronounced, than the past is present and the distant near. New forms of beauty start at once into existence, and all the burial-places of the memory give up their dead. Change the structure of the sentence; substitute one synonyme for another, and the whole effect is destroyed. The spell loses its power; and he who should then hope to conjure with it would find himself as much mistaken as Cassim in the Arabian tale, when he stood crying, "Open Wheat," "Open Barley," to the door which obeyed no sound but "Open Sesame." The miserable failure of Dryden in his attempt to translate into his own diction some parts of the Paradise Lost, is a remarkable instance of this.[1]

In support of these observations we may remark, that scarcely any passages in the poems of Milton are more generally known or more frequently repeated than those which are little more than muster-rolls of names. They are not always more appropriate or more melodious than other names. But they are charmed names. Every one of them is the first link in a long chain of associated ideas. Like the dwelling-place of our infancy revisited in manhood, like the song of our country heard in a strange land, they produce upon us an effect wholly independent of their intrinsic value. One transports us back to a remote period of history. Another places us among the novel scenes and manners of a distant region. A third evokes all the dear classical recollections of childhood, the schoolroom, the dog-eared Virgil, the holiday, and the prize. A fourth brings before us the splendid phantoms of chivalrous romance, the trophied lists, the embroidered housings, the quaint devices, the haunted forests, the enchanted gardens, the achievements of enamoured knights, and the smiles of rescued princesses.[1]

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[1] In his drama entitled "The State of Innocence and Fall of Man."

In none of the works of Milton is his peculiar manner more happily displayed than in the Allegro and the Penseroso. It is impossible to conceive that the mechanism of language can be brought to a more exquisite degree of perfection. These poems differ from others, as atar of roses differs from ordinary rose water, the close packed essence from the thin diluted mixture. They are indeed not so much poems, as collections of hints, from each of which the reader is to make out a poem for himself. Every epithet is a text for a stanza.

The Comus and the Samson Agonistes are works which, though of very different merit, offer some marked points of resemblance. Both are lyric poems in the form of plays. There are perhaps no two kinds of composition so essentially dissimilar as the drama and the ode. The business of the dramatist is to keep himself out of sight, and to let nothing appear but his characters. As soon as he attracts notice to his personal feelings, the illusion is broken. The effect is as unpleasant as that which is produced on the stage by the voice of a prompter or the entrance of a scene-shifter. Hence it was, that the tragedies of Byron were his least successful performances. They resemble those pasteboard pictures invented by the friend of children, Mr. Newbery,[1] in which a single moveable head goes round twenty different bodies, so that the same face looks out upon us successively, from the uniform of a hussar, the furs of a judge, and the rags of a beggar. In all the characters, patriots and tyrants, haters and lovers, the frown and sneer of Harold were discernible in an instant. But this species of egotism, though fatal to the drama, is the inspiration of the ode. It is the part of the lyric poet to abandon himself, without reserve, to his own emotions.

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[1] It may be permissible to illustrate these words of Macaulay by quoting at random a few out of many most beautiful and suggestive lines :—

"Thence to the famous orators repair
Those ancient whose resistless eloquence
Wielded at will that fierce democracy,
Shook the Arsenal and fulmined over Greece
To Macedon and Artaxerxes' throne."

Or again—

"To Agra and Lahor of Great Mogul."

Or—

"Him followed Rimmon, whose delightful seat
Was fair Damascus on the fertile banks
Of Abbana and Pharpar, lucid streams."

Or the line so much admired by Matthew Arnold—

"And Teiresias and Phineus, prophets old."

Or the comparison of the fallen angels weltering on the lake of fire to autumnal leaves that strew the brooks

"In Vallombrosa where the Etrurian shades
High over-arched embower."

Or the lines in which their muster is said to surpass in its immensity what resounds—

"In fable or romance of Uther's son
Begirt with British and Armoric knights
And all who since, baptised or infidel,
Jousted in Aspramont or Montalban
Damasco or Marocco or Trebisond
Or whom Biserta sent from Afric shore
When Charlemain with all his peerage fell
By Fontarabbia."

Between these hostile elements many great men have endeavoured to effect an amalgamation, but never with complete success. The Greek Drama, on the model of which the Samson was written, sprang from the Ode. The dialogue was ingrafted on the chorus, and naturally partook of its character. The genius of the greatest of the Athenian dramatists co-operated with the circumstances under which tragedy made its first appearance. Æschylus was, head and heart, a lyric poet. In his time, the Greeks had far more intercourse with the East than in the days of Homer;[2] and they had not yet acquired that immense superiority in war, in science, and in the arts, which, in the following generation, led them to treat the Asiatics with contempt. From the narrative of Herodotus it should seem that they still looked up, with the veneration of disciples, to Egypt and Assyria. At this period, accordingly, it was natural that the literature of Greece should be tinctured with the Oriental style.[3] And that style, we think, is discernible in the works of Pindar and Æschylus. The latter often reminds us of the Hebrew writers. The book of Job, indeed, in conduct and diction, bears a considerable resemblance to some of his dramas. Considered as plays, his works are absurd; considered as choruses, they are above all praise. If, for instance, we examine the address of Clytæmnestra to Agamemnon on his return,[1] or the description of the seven Argive chiefs,[2] by the principles of dramatic writing, we shall instantly condemn them as monstrous. But if we forget the characters, and think only of the poetry, we shall admit that it has never been surpassed in energy and magnificence. Sophocles[3] made the Greek drama as dramatic as was consistent with its original form. His portraits of men have a sort of similarity; but it is the similarity not of a painting, but of a bas-relief. It suggests a resemblance; but it does not produce an illusion. Euripides[4] attempted to carry the reform further. But it was a task far beyond his powers, perhaps beyond any powers. Instead of correcting what was bad, he destroyed what was excellent. He substituted crutches for stilts, bad sermons for good odes.

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[1] John Newbery, 1713-1767, a well-known publisher, "the first to make the issue of books specially intended for children an important branch of publishing business" (*Dictionary of National Biography*, xl., 313).

[2] We do not know enough about the age of Homer to justify this assertion.

[3] Æschylus was probably born about 525 B.C.; fought at Marathon 490 B.C.; celebrated the repulse of Xerxes 480 B.C. in his *Persæ* and was living and composing in 461 B.C. when Athens was at the height of its successes against Persia. Pindar was roughly his contemporary, so that the remarks in the text are scarcely justified. There is no evidence for the belief that Æschylus or Pindar was under an Oriental influence.

Milton, it is well known, admired Euripides highly, much more highly than, in our opinion, Euripides deserved. Indeed the caresses which this partiality leads our countryman to bestow on "sad Electra's poet,"[5] sometimes remind us of the beautiful Queen of Fairy-land kissing the long ears of Bottom. At all events, there can be no doubt that this veneration for the Athenian, whether just or not, was injurious to the Samson Agonistes. Had Milton taken Æschylus for his model, he would have given himself up to the lyric inspiration, and poured out profusely all the treasures of his mind, without bestowing a thought on those dramatic proprieties, which the nature of the work rendered it impossible to preserve. In the attempt to reconcile things in their own nature inconsistent he has failed, as every one else must have failed. We cannot identify ourselves with the characters, as in a good play. We cannot identify ourselves with the poet, as in a good ode. The conflicting ingredients, like an acid and an alkali mixed, neutralise each other. We are by no means insensible to the merits of this celebrated piece, to the severe dignity of the style, the graceful and pathetic solemnity of the opening speech, or the wild and barbaric melody which gives so striking an effect to the choral passages. But we think it, we confess, the least successful effort of the genius of Milton.[6]

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[1] *Agamemnon*, lines 846-904.

[2] *Seven against Thebes*, lines 362-639.

[3] Sophocles was born about 492 B.C., and lived until 405 B.C., continuing to write dramas even in extreme age.

[4] Euripides was born in 480 B.C. and died in 406 B.C.

[5] Milton, sonnet viii.

[6] It must be remembered that the *Samson Agonistes*, published in 1670, was probably Milton's last work. This will go far to explain its austerity of style and feeling. But surely it is lyrical in this sense that it is the most personal of Milton's longer poems.

The Comus is framed on the model of the Italian Masque, as the Samson is framed on the model of the Greek Tragedy. It is certainly the noblest performance of the kind which exists in any language. It is as far superior to the Faithful Shepherdess[1] as the Faithful Shepherdess is to the Aminta,[2] or the Aminta to the Pastor Fido.[3] It was well for Milton that he had here no Euripides to mislead him. He understood and loved the literature of modern Italy. But he did not feel for it the same veneration which he entertained for the remains of Athenian and Roman poetry, consecrated by so many lofty and endearing recollections. The faults, moreover, of his Italian predecessors were of a kind to which his mind had a deadly antipathy. He could stoop to a plain style, sometimes even to a bald style; but false brilliancy was his utter aversion. His muse had no objection to a russet attire; but she turned with disgust from the finery of Guarini, as tawdry and as paltry as the rags of a chimney-sweeper on May-day. Whatever ornaments she wears are of massive gold, not only dazzling to the sight, but capable of standing the severest test of the crucible.

Milton attended in the Comus to the distinction which he afterwards neglected in the Samson. He made his Masque what it ought to be, essentially lyrical, and dramatic only in semblance. He has not attempted a fruitless struggle against a defect inherent in the nature of that species of composition; and he has therefore succeeded, wherever success was not impossible. The speeches must be read as majestic soliloquies; and he who

"In the covert representation," says Mark Pattison, "which we have in this drama of the actual wreck of Milton, his party and his cause, is supplied that real basis of truth which was necessary to inspire him to write. It is of little moment that the incidents of Samson's life do not form a strict parallel to those of Milton or to the career of the Puritan cause. The resemblance lies in the sentiment and situation, not in the bare event. . . . Add to these the two great personal misfortunes of the poet's life, his first marriage with a Philistine woman out of sympathy with him or his cause, and his blindness; and the basis of reality becomes so complete that the nominal personages of the drama almost disappear behind the history which we read through them" ("Life of Milton" (*English Men of Letters*), pp. 196-197).

[1] The "Faithful Shepherdess" is the beautiful pastoral drama by Fletcher, first published in 1609, "deservedly," says Hallam (*Literature of Europe*, part iii., ch. vi.), "among the most celebrated productions of Fletcher."

[2] The "Aminta," a pastoral play by Torquato Tasso, 1544-1595, first represented before the court of Ferrara in 1573.

[3] The "Pastor Fido," a pastoral play by Guarini, 1537-1612, first represented i 1585. Guarini spent some time at the court of Ferrara, where he became acquainted with Tasso, whose "Aminta" inspired the "Pastor Fido," which in its turn inspired the "Faithful Shepherdess." Hallam's estimate of Guarini is much mor genial than Macaulay's (*Literature of Europe*, part ii., ch. vi.).

so reads them will be enraptured with their eloquence, their sublimity, and their music. The interruptions of the dialogue, however, impose a constraint upon the writer, and break the illusion of the reader. The finest passages are those which are lyric in form as well as in spirit. "I should much commend," says the excellent Sir Henry Wotton in a letter to Milton,[1] "the tragical part if the lyrical did not ravish me with a certain Dorique delicacy in your songs and odes, whereunto, I must plainly confess to you, I have seen yet nothing parallel in our language." The criticism was just. It is when Milton escapes from the shackles of the dialogue, when he is discharged from the labour of uniting two incongruous styles, when he is at liberty to indulge his choral raptures without reserve, that he rises even above himself. Then, like his own good Genius bursting from the earthly form and weeds of Thyrsis, he stands forth in celestial freedom and beauty; he seems to cry exultingly,

> "Now my task is smoothly done,
> I can fly or I can run,"[2]

to skim the earth, to soar above the clouds, to bathe in the Elysian dew of the rainbow, and to inhale the balmy smells of nard and cassia, which the musky winds of the zephyr scatter through the cedared alleys of the Hesperides.

There are several of the minor poems of Milton on which we would willingly make a few remarks. Still more willingly would we enter into a detailed examination of that admirable poem, the Paradise Regained, which, strangely enough, is scarcely ever mentioned except as an instance of the blindness of the parental affection which men of letters bear towards the offspring of their intellects. That Milton was mistaken in preferring this work, excellent as it is, to the Paradise Lost, we readily admit.[3]

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[1] Henry Wotton, Sir, 1568-1639, the distinguished scholar, diplomatist and Provost of Eton College. The letter referred to, dated the 13th of April, 1638, was written to acknowledge the receipt of a copy of *Comus*, and to advise Milton respecting his travels abroad. It was printed in the first collected edition of the early poems (1645), and has been reprinted in Masson's edition of the poems.

[2] *Comus*, lines 1012, 1013.

The latter part of this sentence is somewhat rashly paraphrased from lines 976-996.

[3] It does not appear that Milton rated *Paradise Regained* above *Paradise Lost*. The belief that he did so rests on a misapprehension of Phillips' statement. "It is generally censured to be much inferior to the other (*i.e.*, *Paradise Lost*), though he (Milton) could not hear with patience any such thing when related to him" (*Life of Milton*).

But we are sure that the superiority of the Paradise Lost to the Paradise Regained is not more decided, than the superiority of the Paradise Regained to every poem which has since made its appearance. Our limits, however, prevent us from discussing the point at length. We hasten on to that extraordinary production which the general suffrage of critics has placed in the highest class of human compositions.

The only poem of modern times which can be compared with the Paradise Lost is the Divine Comedy. The subject of Milton, in some points, resembled that of Dante; but he has treated it in a widely different manner. We cannot, we think, better illustrate our opinion respecting our own great poet, than by contrasting him with the father of Tuscan literature.

The poetry of Milton differs from that of Dante, as the hieroglyphics of Egypt differed from the picture-writing of Mexico.[1] The images which Dante employs speak for themselves; they stand simply for what they are. Those of Milton have a signification which is often discernible only to the initiated. Their value depends less on what they directly represent than on what they remotely suggest. However strange, however grotesque, may be the appearance which Dante undertakes to describe, he never shrinks from describing it. He gives us the shape, the colour, the sound, the smell, the taste; he counts the numbers; he measures the size. His similes are the illustrations of a traveller. Unlike those of other poets, and especially of Milton, they are introduced in a plain, business-like manner; not for the sake of any beauty in the objects from which they are drawn; not for the sake of any ornament which they may impart to the poem; but simply in order to make the meaning of the writer as clear to the reader as it is to himself. The ruins of the precipice which led from the sixth to the seventh circle of hell were like those of the rock which fell into the Adige on the south of Trent. The cataract of Phlegethon was like that of Acqua Cheta at the monastery of St. Benedict. The place where the heretics were confined in burning tombs resembled the vast cemetery of Arles.[2]

Now let us compare with the exact details of Dante the dim intimations of Milton. We will cite a few examples. The English poet has never thought of taking the measure of Satan. He gives us merely a vague idea of vast bulk. In one passage the fiend lies stretched out huge in length, floating many a rood, equal in size to the earth-born enemies of Jove, or to the sea-monster which the mariner mistakes for an island. When he addresses himself to battle against the guardian angels, he stands like Teneriffe or Atlas: his stature reaches the sky. Contrast with these descriptions the lines in which Dante has described the gigantic spectre of Nimrod. "His face seemed to me as long and as broad as the ball of St. Peter's at Rome; and his other limbs were in proportion; so that the bank, which concealed him from the waist downwards, nevertheless showed so much of him, that three tall Germans would in vain have attempted to reach to his hair."[1] We are sensible that we do no justice to the admirable style of the Florentine poet. But Mr. Cary's translation is not at hand; and our version, however rude, is sufficient to illustrate our meaning.

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[1] This is not a very felicitous illustration. Matthew Arnold has made some caustic remarks upon the whole passage in his essay ("A French Critic on Milton," *Mixed Essays*).

[2] *Divina Commedia*, *Inferno*, cantos 12, 16 and 9 respectively.

Once more, compare the lazar-house in the eleventh book of the Paradise Lost with the last ward of Malebolge in Dante. Milton avoids the loathsome details, and takes refuge in indistinct but solemn and tremendous imagery,—Despair hurrying from couch to couch to mock the wretches with his attendance, Death shaking his dart over them, but, in spite of supplications, delaying to strike. What says Dante? "There was such a moan there as there would be if all the sick who, between July and September, are in the hospitals of Valdichiana, and of the Tuscan swamps, and of Sardinia, were in one pit together; and such a stench was issuing forth as is wont to issue from decayed limbs."[2]

We will not take upon ourselves the invidious office of settling precedency between two such writers. Each in his own department is incomparable; and each, we may remark, has wisely, or fortunately, taken a subject adapted to exhibit his peculiar talent to the greatest advantage. The Divine Comedy is a personal narrative. Dante is the eye-witness and ear-witness of that which he relates. He is the very man who has heard the tormented spirits crying out for the second death, who has read the dusky characters on the portal within which there is no hope, who has hidden his face from the terrors of the Gorgon, who has fled from the hooks and the seething pitch of Barbariccia and Draghignazzo. His own hands have grasped the shaggy sides of Lucifer. His own feet have climbed the mountain of expiation. His own brow has been marked by the purifying angel. The reader would throw aside such a tale in incredulous disgust, unless it were told with the strongest air of veracity, with a sobriety even in its horrors, with the greatest precision and multiplicity in its details. The narrative of Milton in this respect differs from that of Dante, as the adventures of Amadis differ from those of Gulliver.[1] The author of Amadis would have made his book ridiculous if he had introduced those minute particulars which give such a charm to the work of Swift, the nautical observations, the affected delicacy about names, the official documents transcribed at full length, and all the unmeaning gossip and scandal of the court, springing out of nothing, and tending to nothing. We are not shocked at being told that a man who lived, nobody knows when, saw many very strange sights, and we can easily abandon ourselves to the illusion of the romance. But when Lemuel Gulliver, surgeon, resident at Rotherhithe, tells us of pygmies and giants, flying islands, and philosophising horses, nothing but such circumstantial touches could produce for a single moment a deception on the imagination.

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[1] *Inferno*, canto 29.

[2] *Ibia.*

Of all the poets who have introduced into their works the agency of supernatural beings, Milton has succeeded best.[2] Here Dante decidedly yields to him: and as this is a point on which many rash and ill-considered judgments have been pronounced, we feel inclined to dwell on it a little longer. The most fatal error which a poet can possibly commit in the management of his machinery,[3] is that of attempting to philosophise too much. Milton has been often censured for ascribing to spirits many functions of which spirits must be incapable. But these objections, though sanctioned by eminent names, originate, we venture to say, in profound ignorance of the art of poetry.

What is spirit? What are our own minds, the portion of spirit with which we are best acquainted? We observe certain phænomena. We cannot explain them into material causes. We therefore infer that there exists something which is not material. But of this something we have no idea. We can define it only by negatives. We can reason about it only by symbols. We use the word; but we have no image of the thing; and the business of poetry is with images, and not with words. The poet uses words indeed; but they are merely the instruments of his art, not its objects. They are the materials which he is to dispose in such a manner as to present a picture to the mental eye. And if they are not so disposed, they are no more entitled to be called poetry than a bale of canvass and a box of colours to be called a painting.

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[1] "A new era of romance began with the *Amadis de Gaul*, derived, as some have thought, but upon insufficient evidence, from a French metrical original, but certainly written in Portugal, though in the Castilian language, by Vasco de Lobeyra, whose death is generally fixed in 1325" (Hallam, *Literature of Europe*, part i., ch. ii.). It was the prototype of those high-flown romances of impossible valour, love and courtesy which were parodied by Cervantes in *Don Quixote*.

[2] Perhaps the most unlucky critical remark in the whole essay.

[3] This was the old-fashioned critical term for the divine or supernatural agents introduced into a poem. It is derived from the machine (Gr. μηχανή) used in the Greek theatre to effect their descent and ascent.

Logicians may reason about abstractions. But the great mass of men must have images. The strong tendency of the multitude in all ages and nations to idolatry can be explained on no other principle. The first inhabitants of Greece, there is reason to believe, worshipped one invisible Deity.[1] But the necessity of having something more definite to adore produced, in a few centuries, the innumerable crowd of Gods and Goddesses. In like manner the ancient Persians thought it impious to exhibit the Creator under a human form. Yet even these transferred to the Sun the worship which, in speculation, they considered due only to the Supreme Mind. The history of the Jews is the record of a continued struggle between pure Theism, supported by the most terrible sanctions, and the strangely fascinating desire of having some visible and tangible object of adoration. Perhaps none of the secondary causes which Gibbon has assigned for the rapidity with which Christianity spread over the world, while Judaism scarcely ever acquired a proselyte, operated more powerfully than this feeling. God, the uncreated, the incomprehensible, the invisible, attracted few worshippers. A philosopher might admire so noble a conception; but the crowd turned away in disgust from words which presented no image to their minds. It was before Deity embodied in a human form, walking among men, partaking of their infirmities, leaning on their bosoms, weeping over their graves, slumbering in the manger, bleeding on the cross, that the prejudices of the Synagogue, and the doubts of the Academy, and the pride of the portico, and the fasces of the Lictor, and the swords of thirty legions, were humbled in the dust. Soon after Christianity had achieved its triumph, the principle which had assisted it began to corrupt it. It became a new Paganism. Patron saints assumed the offices of household gods. St. George took the place of Mars. St. Elmo consoled the mariner for the loss of Castor and Pollux.[2] The

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[1] There is no reason to suppose that the first inhabitants of Greece did anything of the kind.

[2] The electric lights which sometimes play around the masts and rigging of ships in a storm were regarded by ancient and by mediæval seamen as giving assur-

Virgin Mother and Cecilia succeeded to Venus and the Muses. The fascination of sex and loveliness was again joined to that of celestial dignity; and the homage of chivalry was blended with that of religion. Reformers have often made a stand against these feelings; but never with more than apparent and partial success. The men who demolished the images in cathedrals have not always been able to demolish those which were enshrined in their minds. It would not be difficult to show that in politics the same rule holds good. Doctrines, we are afraid, must generally be embodied before they can excite a strong public feeling. The multitude is more easily interested for the most unmeaning badge, or the most insignificant name, than for the most important principle.

From these considerations, we infer that no poet, who should affect that metaphysical accuracy for the want of which Milton has been blamed, would escape a disgraceful failure. Still, however, there was another extreme which, though far less dangerous, was also to be avoided. The imaginations of men are in a great measure under the control of their opinions. The most exquisite art of poetical colouring can produce no illusion, when it is employed to represent that which is at once perceived to be incongruous and absurd. Milton wrote in an age of philosophers and theologians. It was necessary, therefore, for him to abstain from giving such a shock to their understandings as might break the charm which it was his object to throw over their imaginations. This is the real explanation of the indistinctness and inconsistency with which he has often been reproached. Dr. Johnson acknowledges that it was absolutely necessary that the spirit should be clothed with material forms. "But," says he, "the poet should have secured the consistency of his system by keeping immateriality out of sight, and seducing the reader to drop it from his thoughts."[1] This is easily said; but what if Milton could not seduce his readers to drop immateriality from their thoughts? What if the contrary opinion had taken so full a possession of the minds of men as to leave no room even for the half belief which poetry requires? Such we suspect to have been the case. It was impossible for the poet to adopt altogether the material or the immaterial system. He therefore took his stand on the debatable ground. He left the whole in ambiguity. He has doubtless, by so doing,

ance of safety through supernatural aid. The ancients took them for tokens of the presence of Castor and Pollux. Christians named them St. Elmo's lights.

[1] Johnson, "Life of Milton."

laid himself open to the charge of inconsistency. But, though philosophically in the wrong, we cannot but believe that he was poetically in the right. This task, which almost any other writer would have found impracticable, was easy to him.[1] The peculiar art which he possessed of communicating his meaning circuitously through a long succession of associated ideas, and of intimating more than he expressed, enabled him to disguise those incongruities which he could not avoid.

Poetry which relates to the beings of another world ought to be at once mysterious and picturesque.[2] That of Milton is so. That of Dante is picturesque indeed beyond any that ever was written. Its effect approaches to that produced by the pencil or the chisel. But it is picturesque to the exclusion of all mystery.[3] This is a fault on the right side, a fault inseparable from the plan of Dante's poem, which, as we have already observed, rendered the utmost accuracy of description necessary. Still it is a fault. The supernatural agents excite an interest; but it is not the interest which is proper to supernatural agents. We feel that we could talk to the ghosts and dæmons, without any emotion of unearthly awe. We could, like Don Juan, ask them to supper, and eat heartily in their company. Dante's angels are good men with wings. His devils are spiteful ugly executioners. His dead men are merely living men in strange situations. The scene which passes between the poet and Farinata is justly celebrated.[4] Still, Farinata in the burning tomb is exactly what Farinata would have been at an *auto da fe.* Nothing can be more touching than the first interview of Dante and Beatrice.[5] Yet what is it, but a lovely woman chiding, with sweet austere composure, the lover for whose affection she is grateful, but whose vices she reprobates? The feelings which give the passage its charm would suit the streets of Florence as well as the summit of the Mount of Purgatory.

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[1] This disquisition upon the proper poetical treatment of spiritual beings seems to go wide of the mark. Philosophical accuracy, if such be possible in this case, is not required from the poet. What is needful is that his spiritual beings should give as nearly as may be the same impression of life and reality as do his human beings. It is because the gods in the Homeric poems have this life and reality that they interest the modern reader who knows that they never did and never could exist. The same test must decide whether in this particular Dante or Milton has been more successful. Most readers of *Paradise Lost* would probably agree that Milton has succeeded in giving life and interest to Satan, but scarcely to Uriel or Raphael.

[2] Milton's poetry is certainly picturesque, but it can scarcely be termed mysterious. In *Paradise Lost* there is too much dogmatic theology and too little sense of the ineffable. Owing chiefly to this deficiency the portions of *Paradise Lost* where Omnipotence directly intervenes are almost unreadable. But neither Macaulay's temperament nor his education was such as to render him sensitive on this point.

[3] Few readers of the *Divina Commedia* will deny to Dante the sense of mystery. His Paradise is far more mysterious than Milton's Heaven.

[4] *Inferno*, canto 10.

[5] *Purgatorio*, canto 30.

The spirits of Milton are unlike those of almost all other writers. His fiends, in particular, are wonderful creations. They are not metaphysical abstractions. They are not wicked men. They are not ugly beasts. They have no horns, no tails, none of the fee-faw-fum of Tasso[1] and Klopstock.[2] They have just enough in common with human nature to be intelligible to human beings. Their characters are, like their forms, marked by a certain dim resemblance to those of men, but exaggerated to gigantic dimensions, and veiled in mysterious gloom.

Perhaps the gods and dæmons of Æschylus may best bear a comparison with the angels and devils of Milton. The style of the Athenian had, as we have remarked, something of the Oriental character; and the same peculiarity may be traced in his mythology. It has nothing of the amenity and elegance which we generally find in the superstitions of Greece. All is rugged, barbaric, and colossal. The legends of Æschylus seem to harmonize less with the fragrant groves and graceful porticoes in which his countrymen paid their vows to the God of Light and Goddess of Desire, than with those huge and grotesque labyrinths of eternal granite in which Egypt enshrined her mystic Osiris, or in which Hindostan still bows down to her seven-headed idols. His favourite gods are those of the elder generation, the sons of heaven and earth, compared with whom Jupiter himself was a stripling and an upstart, the gigantic Titans, and the inexorable Furies. Foremost among his creations of this class stands Prometheus, half fiend, half redeemer, the friend of man, the sullen and implacable enemy of heaven. Prometheus bears undoubtedly a considerable resemblance to the Satan of Milton. In both we find the same impatience of control, the same ferocity, the same unconquerable pride. In both characters also are mingled, though in very different proportions, some kind and generous feelings. Prometheus, however, is hardly superhuman enough. He talks too much of his chains and his uneasy posture: he is rather too much depressed and agitated. His resolution seems to depend on the knowledge which he possesses that he holds the fate of his torturer in his hands, and that the hour of his release will surely come. But Satan is a creature of another sphere. The might of his intellectual nature is victorious over the extremity of pain. Amidst agonies which cannot be conceived without horror, he deliberates, resolves, and even exults. Against the sword of Michael, against the thunder of Jehovah, against the flaming lake, and the marl burning with solid fire, against the prospect of an eternity of unintermitted misery, his spirit bears up unbroken, resting on its own innate energies, requiring no support from any thing external, nor even from hope itself.

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[1] In his *Jerusalem Delivered.* Perhaps the description of the infernal assembly in the beginning of the fourth book may have suggested this scornful remark.

[2] Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock, 1724-1803, gained a great reputation by his epic, *The Messiah*, now little read. In the second canto most readers will find enough to satisfy curiosity about Klopstock's devils.

To return for a moment to the parallel which we have been attempting to draw between Milton and Dante, we would add that the poetry of these great men has in a considerable degree taken its character from their moral qualities. They are not egotists. They rarely obtrude their idiosyncrasies on their readers. They have nothing in common with those modern beggars for fame, who extort a pittance from the compassion of the inexperienced by exposing the nakedness and sores of their minds. Yet it would be difficult to name two writers whose works have been more completely, though undesignedly, coloured by their personal feelings.

The character of Milton was peculiarly distinguished by loftiness of spirit; that of Dante by intensity of feeling. In every line of the Divine Comedy we discern the asperity[1] which is produced by pride struggling with misery. There is perhaps no work in the world so deeply and uniformly sorrowful. The melancholy of Dante was no fantastic caprice. It was not, as far as at this distance of time can be judged, the effect of external circumstances. It was from within. Neither love nor glory, neither the conflicts of earth nor the hope of heaven could dispel it. It turned every consolation and every pleasure into its own nature. It resembled that noxious Sardinian soil of which the intense bitterness is said to have been perceptible even in its honey.[2] His mind was, in the noble language of the Hebrew poet, "a land of darkness, as darkness itself, and where the light was as darkness."[3] The gloom of his character discolours all the passions of men, and all the face of nature, and tinges with its own livid hue the flowers of Paradise and the glories of the eternal throne. All the portraits of him are singularly characteristic. No person can look on the features, noble even to ruggedness, the dark furrows of the cheek, the haggard and woful stare of the eye, the sullen and contemptuous curve of the lip, and doubt that they belong to a man too proud and too sensitive to be happy.

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[1] Milton was by no means free from this fault.

[2] Horace, *Art of Poetry*, l. 375, refers to the bitter flavour of Sardinian honey.

[3] Job x. 22.

Milton was, like Dante, a statesman and a lover; and, like Dante, he had been unfortunate in ambition and in love. He had survived his health and his sight, the comforts of his home, and the prosperity of his party. Of the great men by whom he had been distinguished at his entrance into life, some had been taken away from the evil to come; some had carried into foreign climates their unconquerable hatred of oppression; some were pining in dungeons; and some had poured forth their blood on scaffolds. Venal and licentious scribblers, with just sufficient talent to clothe the thoughts of a pandar in the style of a bellman, were now the favourite writers of the Sovereign and of the public. It was a loathsome herd, which could be compared to nothing so fitly as to the rabble of Comus, grotesque monsters, half bestial, half human, dropping with wine, bloated with gluttony, and reeling in obscene dances. Amidst these that fair Muse was placed, like the chaste lady of the Masque, lofty, spotless, and serene, to be chattered at, and pointed at, and grinned at, by the whole rout of Satyrs and Goblins. If ever despondency and asperity could be excused in any man, they might have been excused in Milton. But the strength of his mind overcame every calamity. Neither blindness, nor gout, nor age, nor penury, nor domestic afflictions, nor political disappointments, nor abuse, nor proscription, nor neglect, had power to disturb his sedate and majestic patience. His spirits do not seem to have been high, but they were singularly equable. His temper was serious, perhaps stern; but it was a temper which no sufferings could render sullen or fretful. Such as it was when, on the eve of great events, he returned from his travels, in the prime of health and manly beauty, loaded with literary distinctions, and glowing with patriotic hopes, such it continued to be when, after having experienced every calamity which is incident to our nature, old, poor, sightless and disgraced, he retired to his hovel to die.

Hence it was that, though he wrote the Paradise Lost at a time of life when images of beauty and tenderness are in general beginning to fade, even from those minds in which they have not been effaced by anxiety and disappointment, he adorned it with all that is most lovely and delightful in the physical and in the moral world. Neither Theocritus nor Ariosto had a finer or a more healthful sense of the pleasantness of external objects, or loved better to luxuriate amidst sunbeams and flowers, the songs of nightingales, the juice of summer fruits, and the coolness of shady fountains. His conception of love unites all the voluptuousness of the Oriental haram, and all the gallantry of the chivalric tournament, with all the pure and quiet affection of an English fireside. His poetry reminds us of the miracles of Alpine scenery. Nooks and dells, beautiful as fairy land, are embosomed in its most rugged and gigantic elevations. The roses and myrtles bloom unchilled on the verge of the avalanche.

Traces, indeed, of the peculiar character of Milton may be found in all his works; but it is most strongly displayed in the Sonnets. Those remarkable poems have been undervalued by critics who have not understood their nature. They have no epigrammatic point. There is none of the ingenuity of Filicaja[1] in the thought, none of the hard and brilliant enamel of Petrarch in the style. They are simple but majestic records of the feelings of the poet; as little tricked out for the public eye as his diary would have been. A victory, an unexpected attack upon the city, a momentary fit of depression or exultation, a jest thrown out against one of his books, a dream which for a short time restored to him that beautiful face over which the grave had closed for ever,[2] led him to musings, which, without effort, shaped themselves into verse. The unity of sentiment and severity of style which characterise these little pieces remind us of the Greek Anthology, or perhaps still more of the Collects of the English Liturgy. The noble poem on the massacres of Piedmont is strictly a collect in verse.[3]

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[1] Vincenzo da Filicaja, 1642-1707, whom Macaulay admired far more than would appear from this allusion, and whom he has elsewhere termed the greatest lyric poet of modern times. See essay on Addison, vol. iii., p. 346.

[2] Not Milton's first wife, Mary Powell, but his second, Catherine Woodcock, whom he married in 1656 and who died in 1658.

[3] Compare Pattison's observations upon Milton's sonnets: "Their very force and beauty consist in their being the momentary and spontaneous explosion of an emotion welling up from the depths of the soul and forcing itself into metrical expression, as it were, in spite of the writer. . . . In their naked, unadorned simplicity of language they may easily seem to a reader fresh from Petrarch to be homely and prosaic. Place them in relation to the circumstances on which each piece turns and we begin to feel the superiority for poetic effect of real emotion over emotion meditated and revived. . . . It is this actuality which distinguishes the sonnets of Milton from any other sonnets. Of this difference Wordsworth was conscious when he struck out the phrase 'In his hand the *thing* became a trump'" ("Life of Milton" (*English Men of Letters*), pp. 169-170).

The Sonnets are more or less striking, according as the occasions which gave birth to them are more or less interesting. But they are, almost without exception, dignified by a sobriety and greatness of mind to which we know not where to look for a parallel. It would, indeed, be scarcely safe to draw any decided inferences as to the character of a writer from passages directly egotistical. But the qualities which we have ascribed to Milton, though perhaps most strongly marked in those parts of his works which treat of his personal feelings, are distinguishable in every page, and impart to all his writings, prose and poetry, English, Latin, and Italian, a strong family likeness.

His public conduct was such as was to be expected from a man of a spirit so high and of an intellect so powerful. He lived at one of the most memorable eras in the history of mankind, at the very crisis of the great conflict between Oromasdes and Arimanes,[1] liberty and despotism, reason and prejudice.[2] That great battle was fought for no single generation, for no single land. The destinies of the human race were staked on the same cast with the freedom of the English people. Then were first proclaimed those mighty principles which have since worked their way into the depths of the American forests, which have roused Greece from the slavery and degradation of two thousand years, and which, from one end of Europe to the other, have kindled an unquenchable fire in the hearts of the oppressed, and loosed the knees of the oppressors with an unwonted fear.

Of those principles, then struggling for their infant existence, Milton was the most devoted and eloquent literary champion. We need not say how much we admire his public conduct. But we cannot disguise from ourselves that a large portion of his countrymen still think it unjustifiable. The civil war, indeed, has been more discussed, and is less understood, than any event in English history. The friends of liberty laboured under the disadvantage of which the lion in the fable complained so bitterly. Though they were the conquerors, their enemies were the painters. As a body, the Roundheads had done their utmost to decry and ruin literature; and literature was even with them, as, in the long run, it always is with its enemies. The best book on their side of the question is the charming narrative of Mrs. Hutchinson.[1] May's[2] History of the Parliament is good; but it breaks off at the most interesting crisis of the struggle. The performance of Ludlow[3] is foolish and violent; and most of the later writers who have espoused the same cause, Oldmixon[4] for instance, and Catherine Macaulay,[5] have, to say the least, been more distinguished by zeal than either by candour or by skill. On the other side are the most authoritative and the most popular historical works in our language, that of Clarendon,[6] and that of

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[1] Oromasdes (Ahura Mazda) and Ahrimanes (Angra Mainya) were in the ancient religion of Persia the powers of good and of evil respectively. Each with his host of angels they waged unceasing war for the possession of the universe. To fight upon the side of Oromasdes the beneficent power was man's duty and his happiness.

[2] This is an example of misleading rhetoric. It is quite possible to recognise the immense service which the Puritans rendered to liberty and truth by their obstinate refusal to be coerced and yet to see that they were for the most part as dogmatic and intolerant as their enemies. The conflict was less between reason and prejudice than between hostile prejudices which in the long run failed to put each other down.

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[1] Lucy, daughter of Sir Allen Apsley, born in 1620 (date of death unknown). She married in 1638 John Hutchinson, who became a colonel in the army of the Parliament and sat in the High Court of Justice which tried Charles I. Her *Memoirs* of him give a deep insight into Puritan thought and feeling, but do not constitute a history of the period. They have been excellently edited by Mr. C. H. Firth.

[2] Thomas May, 1595-1650, a facile man of letters who wrote plays, poems, translations and original prose, was employed by the House of Commons in 1646 to draw up a declaration for vindicating to the world the honour of the Parliament. In 1647 he published the *History of the Long Parliament*, which may in a sense be regarded as an official version of its proceedings, yet has obtained the praise of such men as Chatham.

[3] Edmund Ludlow, 1617-1692, a member of the Long Parliament, rose to be lieutenant-general in the Parliamentary army. He sat in the High Court of Justice and held high command in the conquest of Ireland. An inflexible republican he could not be brought to approve the rule of Cromwell. Forced to fly at the Restoration he spent many years in exile and died at Vevey on the Lake of Geneva. His *Memoirs*, which afford much knowledge respecting the Civil War and Commonwealth, have also been edited by Mr. C. H. Firth.

[4] John Oldmixon, 1673-1742, wrote amongst other historical works a *Critical History of England* and a *History of England during the Reigns of the Royal House of Stuart* in which he attacked Clarendon and gave a Whig version of the events of the Stuart period. He is remembered chiefly by Pope's ridicule in the *Dunciad*.

[5] Catherine Sawbridge, 1731-1791, who married in 1760 Dr. Macaulay, wrote a *History of England* from the accession of James I. to that of the Brunswick line, which at one time had a considerable reputation. She was a decided Whig or rather republican. It was of Mrs. Macaulay that Johnson observed: "She is better employed at her toilet, than using her pen. It is better she should be reddening her own cheeks than blackening other people's characters."

[6] Edward Hyde, first earl of Clarendon, 1609-1674, sat in the Long Parliament and was at first an active member of the reforming majority. When it was broken up by differences of opinion as to the reformation of the Church, Hyde, along with his friend Falkland, became a leader of the party opposed to change. He served Charles I. in the Civil War and shared the wanderings of Charles II. After the Restoration he became Chancellor and Earl of Clarendon, and was for a while chief minister, but, losing the confidence of Charles and becoming unpopular in the country, he was impeached and went into exile in 1667. During the remainder of his life he was chiefly employed in writing his *History of the Great Rebellion*, which continues to be one of the principal authorities for that period, although impaired by prejudice and inaccuracy.

Hume.[1] The former is not only ably written and full of valuable information, but has also an air of dignity and sincerity which makes even the prejudices and errors with which it abounds respectable. Hume, from whose fascinating narrative the great mass of the reading public are still contented to take their opinions, hated religion so much that he hated liberty for having been allied with religion, and has pleaded the cause of tyranny with the dexterity of an advocate, while affecting the impartiality of a judge.

The public conduct of Milton must be approved or condemned according as the resistance of the people to Charles the First shall appear to be justifiable or criminal. We shall therefore make no apology for dedicating a few pages to the discussion of that interesting and most important question. We shall not argue it on general grounds. We shall not recur to those primary principles from which the claim of any government to the obedience of its subjects is to be deduced. We are entitled to that vantage ground; but we will relinquish it. We are, on this point, so confident of superiority, that we are not unwilling to imitate the ostentatious generosity of those ancient knights, who vowed to joust without helmet or shield against all enemies, and to give their antagonists the advantage of sun and wind. We will take the naked constitutional question. We confidently affirm, that every reason which can be urged in favour of the Revolution of 1688 may be urged with at least equal force in favour of what is called the Great Rebellion.

In one respect, only, we think, can the warmest admirers of Charles venture to say that he was a better sovereign than his son. He was not, in name and profession, a Papist; we say in name and profession, because both Charles himself and his creature Laud, while they abjured the innocent badges of Popery, retained all its worst vices, a complete subjection of reason to authority, a weak preference of form to substance, a childish passion for mummeries, an idolatrous veneration for the priestly character, and, above all, a merciless intolerance.[1] This, however, we waive. We will concede that Charles was a good Protestant; but we say that his Protestantism does not make the slightest distinction between his case and that of James.

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[1] David Hume, 1711-1776, published between 1754 and 1761 his *History of England*, which as a general history remained without a rival until the appearance of Lingard's great work. A philosopher and man of letters rather than a professed historian, Hume took too little pains in research and too much pains to prove a thesis. His book, in spite of many touches of genius, is now obsolete. He angered the Whigs by endeavouring to show that the Stuarts could plead precedents for most of the acts which their opponents termed unconstitutional. But to say that "he hated religion so much that he hated liberty for having been allied with religion" is mere childish petulance. It implies that the opponents of the Puritans had no religion. Hume sympathised with the Stuarts because he was a Scotchman and distrusted popular government because he was a sceptic.

The principles of the Revolution have often been grossly misrepresented, and never more than in the course of the present year.[2] There is a certain class of men, who, while they profess to hold in reverence the great names and great actions of former times, never look at them for any other purpose than in order to find in them some excuse for existing abuses. In every venerable precedent they pass by what is essential, and take only what is accidental: they keep out of sight what is beneficial, and hold up to public imitation all that is defective. If, in any part of any great example, there be any thing unsound, these flesh-flies detect it with an unerring instinct, and dart upon it with a ravenous delight. If some good end has been attained in spite of them, they feel, with their prototype, that

> "Their labour must be to pervert that end,
> And out of good still to find means of evil." [3]

To the blessings which England has derived from the Revolution these people are utterly insensible. The expulsion of a tyrant, the solemn recognition of popular rights, liberty, security, toleration, all go for nothing with them. One sect there was, which, from unfortunate temporary causes, it was thought necessary to keep under close restraint. One part of the empire there was so unhappily circumstanced, that at that time its misery was necessary to our happiness, and its slavery to our freedom. These are the parts of the Revolution which the politicians of whom we speak, love to contemplate, and which seem to them not indeed to vindicate, but in some degree to palliate, the good which it has produced. Talk to them of Naples, of

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[1] The unfairness of this innuendo against Charles I. and Laud will hardly be denied. They were not more hostile to the free exercise of reason or more intolerant than the majority of the Puritans.

[2] To understand this passage we must remember that, when Macaulay wrote his essay on Milton, the strife of parties centred on Catholic Emancipation. The Whigs supported the claims of the Catholics on Whig principles. The Tories and the Orangemen professed to be defending the advantages gained by the Revolution of 1688 and made Willian III. the hero of Protestant ascendency.

[3] Slightly altered from *Paradise Lost*, book i., lines 164-165:—

> "Our labour must be to pervert that end
> And out of good still to find means of evil."

Spain, or of South America.[1] They stand forth zealots for the doctrine of Divine Right which has now come back to us, like a thief from transportation, under the *alias* of Legitimacy. But mention the miseries of Ireland. Then William is a hero. Then Somers and Shrewsbury are great men. Then the Revolution is a glorious era. The very same persons who, in this country, never omit an opportunity of reviving every wretched Jacobite slander respecting the Whigs of that period, have no sooner crossed St. George's Channel, than they begin to fill their bumpers to the glorious and immortal memory. They may truly boast that they look not at men, but at measures. So that evil be done, they care not who does it; the arbitrary Charles, or the liberal William, Ferdinand the Catholic, or Frederic the Protestant.[2] On such occasions their deadliest opponents may reckon upon their candid construction. The bold assertions of these people have of late impressed a large portion of the public with an opinion that James the Second was expelled simply because he was a Catholic, and that the Revolution was essentially a Protestant Revolution.

But this certainly was not the case; nor can any person who has acquired more knowledge of the history of those times than is to be found in Goldsmith's Abridgement believe that, if James had held his own religious opinions without wishing to make proselytes, or if, wishing even to make proselytes, he had contented himself with exerting only his constitutional influence for that purpose, the Prince of Orange would ever have been invited over. Our ancestors, we suppose, knew their own meaning; and, if we may believe them, their hostility was primarily not to popery, but to tyranny. They did not drive out a tyrant because he was a Catholic; but they excluded Catholics from the crown, because they thought them likely to be tyrants. The ground on which they, in their famous resolution, declared the throne vacant, was this, "that James had broken the fundamental laws of the kingdom." Every man, therefore, who approves of the Revolution of 1688[1] must hold that the breach of fundamental laws on the part of the sovereign justifies resistance. The question, then, is this; Had Charles the First broken the fundamental laws of England?

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[1] At the downfall of Napoleon Ferdinand VII. recovered the crown of Spain and his cousin, Ferdinand IV., the crown of Naples. They governed in such a manner as to engender a discontent which in 1821 broke into rebellion. The royal authority was restored in Spain by the French and in Naples by the Austrian Government, both powers acting on the principle that all revolutionary movements must be suppressed and all legitimate monarchs upheld in the interest of European order and irrespective of the wishes of the particular nations most concerned. The South American colonies of Spain had been in revolt for some time previous to 1825, and their independence had been recognised by the United Kingdom and by the United States although not by Spain. Canning, then Secretary for Foreign Affairs, committed us to this step, which was not generally approved by the strict Tories.

[2] Frederic in this context must be a slip of the pen. At the time when this essay was written, the King of Prussia, Frederic William III., was manifesting an illiberal spirit. No Frederic had sat on the Prussian throne since Frederic II. (the Great), who died in 1786 and was conspicuously tolerant.

No person can answer in the negative, unless he refuses credit, not merely to all the accusations brought against Charles by his opponents, but to the narratives of the warmest Royalists, and to the confessions of the King himself. If there be any truth in any historian of any party who has related the events of that reign, the conduct of Charles, from his accession to the meeting of the Long Parliament, had been a continued course of oppression and treachery. Let those who applaud the Revolution, and condemn the Rebellion, mention one act of James the Second to which a parallel is not to be found in the history of his father. Let them lay their fingers on a single article in the Declaration of Right, presented by the two Houses to William and Mary, which Charles is not acknowledged to have violated. He had, according to the testimony of his own friends, usurped the functions of the legislature, raised taxes without the consent of parliament, and quartered troops on the people in the most illegal and vexatious manner. Not a single session of parliament had passed without some unconstitutional attack on the freedom of debate; the right of petition was grossly violated; arbitrary judgments, exorbitant fines, and unwarranted imprisonments, were grievances of daily occurrence. If these things do not justify resistance, the Revolution was treason; if they do, the Great Rebellion was laudable.

But, it is said, why not adopt milder measures? Why, after the King had consented to so many reforms, and renounced so many oppressive prerogatives, did the parliament continue to rise in their demands at the risk of provoking a civil war? The ship-money had been given up. The Star Chamber had been abolished. Provision had been made for the frequent convocation and secure deliberation of parliaments. Why not pursue an end confessedly good by peaceable and regular means? We recur again to the analogy of the Revolution. Why was James driven from the throne? Why was he not retained upon conditions? He too had offered to call a free parliament and to submit to its decision all the matters in dispute. Yet we are in the habit of praising our forefathers, who preferred a revolution, a disputed succession, a dynasty of strangers, twenty years of foreign and intestine war, a standing army, and a national debt, to the rule, however restricted, of a tried and proved tyrant. The Long Parliament acted on the same principle, and is entitled to the same praise. They could not trust the King. He had no doubt passed salutary laws; but what assurance was there that he would not break them? He had renounced oppressive prerogatives; but where was the security that he would not resume them? The nation had to deal with a man whom no tie could bind, a man who made and broke promises with equal facility, a man whose honour had been a hundred times pawned, and never redeemed.

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[1] Almost everybody will admit that the Revolution of 1688 was quite justifiable. But nobody has ever been able to define with exactness "the fundamental laws of the kingdom."

Here, indeed, the Long Parliament stands on still stronger ground than the Convention of 1688. No action of James can be compared to the conduct of Charles with respect to the Petition of Right. The Lords and Commons present him with a bill in which the constitutional limits of his power are marked out. He hesitates; he evades; at last he bargains to give his assent for five subsidies. The bill receives his solemn assent; the subsidies are voted; but no sooner is the tyrant relieved, than he returns at once to all the arbitrary measures which he had bound himself to abandon, and violates all the clauses of the very Act which he had been paid to pass.[1]

For more than ten years the people had seen the rights which were theirs by a double claim, by immemorial inheritance and by recent purchase, infringed by the perfidious king who had recognised them. At length circumstances compelled Charles to summon another parliament: another chance was given to our fathers: were they to throw it away as they had thrown away the former? Were they again to be cozened by *le Roi le veut*?[2] Were they again to advance their money on pledges which had been forfeited over and over again? Were they to lay a second Petition of Right at the foot of the throne, to grant another lavish aid in exchange for another unmeaning ceremony, and then to take their departure, till, after ten years more of fraud and oppression, their prince should again require a supply, and again repay it with a perjury? They were compelled to choose whether they would trust a tyrant or conquer him. We think that they chose wisely and nobly.

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[1] Professor Gardiner has shown that the words in the Petition of Right which restrain the King from raising taxes by his own authority really are ambiguous and may not have been meant to cover indirect taxation. It was on the interpretation of these words that the King and the Parliament quarrelled in the ensuing session. Macaulay has therefore overstated his case.

[2] The form of words used in giving the royal assent to a bill.

The advocates of Charles, like the advocates of other malefactors against whom overwhelming evidence is produced, generally decline all controversy about the facts, and content themselves with calling testimony to character. He had so many private virtues! And had James the Second no private virtues? Was Oliver Cromwell, his bitterest enemies themselves being judges, destitute of private virtues? And what, after all, are the virtues ascribed to Charles? A religious zeal, not more sincere than that of his son, and fully as weak and narrow-minded, and a few of the ordinary household decencies which half the tombstones in England claim for those who lie beneath them. A good father! A good husband! Ample apologies indeed for fifteen years of persecution, tyranny, and falsehood!

We charge him with having broken his coronation oath; and we are told that he kept his marriage vow! We accuse him of having given up his people to the merciless inflictions of the most hot-headed and hard-hearted of prelates; and the defence is, that he took his little son on his knee and kissed him! We censure him for having violated the articles of the Petition of Right, after having, for good and valuable consideration, promised to observe them; and we are informed that he was accustomed to hear prayers at six o'clock in the morning! It is to such considerations as these, together with his Vandyke dress, his handsome face, and his peaked beard, that he owes, we verily believe, most of his popularity with the present generation.

For ourselves, we own that we do not understand the common phrase, a good man, but a bad king. We can as easily conceive a good man and an unnatural father, or a good man and a treacherous friend. We cannot, in estimating the character of an individual, leave out of our consideration his conduct in the most important of all human relations; and if in that relation we find him to have been selfish, cruel, and deceitful, we shall take the liberty to call him a bad man, in spite of all his temperance at table, and all his regularity at chapel.

We cannot refrain from adding a few words respecting a topic on which the defenders of Charles are fond of dwelling. If, they say, he governed his people ill, he at least governed them after the example of his predecessors. If he violated their privileges, it was because those privileges had not been accurately defined. No act of oppression has ever been imputed to him which has not a parallel in the annals of the Tudors. This point Hume has laboured, with an art which is as discreditable in a historical work as it would be admirable in a forensic address. The answer is short, clear, and decisive. Charles had assented to the Petition of Right. He had renounced the oppressive powers said to have been exercised by his predecessors, and he had renounced them for money. He was not entitled to set up his antiquated claims against his own recent release.

These arguments are so obvious, that it may seem superfluous to dwell upon them. But those who have observed how much the events of that time are misrepresented and misunderstood will not blame us for stating the case simply. It is a case of which the simplest statement is the strongest.

The enemies of the Parliament, indeed, rarely choose to take issue on the great points of the question. They content themselves with exposing some of the crimes and follies to which public commotions necessarily give birth. They bewail the unmerited fate of Strafford.[1] They execrate the lawless violence of the army. They laugh at the Scriptural names of the preachers. Major-generals fleecing their districts;[2] soldiers revelling on the spoils of a ruined peasantry; upstarts, enriched by the public plunder, taking possession of the hospitable firesides and hereditary trees of the old gentry; boys smashing the beautiful windows of cathedrals; Quakers riding naked through the market-place;[3] Fifth-monarchy-men shouting for King Jesus;[4] agitators lecturing from the tops of tubs on the fate of Agag;—[1] all these, they tell us, were the offspring of the Great Rebellion.

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[1] Thomas Wentworth, Sir, 1593-1641, a leader of the Opposition to the court in the first session of the third Parliament of Charles I., who afterwards went over to the King, was created Baron Wentworth and became President of the Council of the North in 1629, Lord Deputy of Ireland in 1632 and Earl of Strafford in 1640. He was the ablest and most resolute counsellor of Charles I., was impeached in the first session of the Long Parliament, and when the impeachment seemed likely to fail was condemned by bill of attainder and executed, May, 1641. His career and his punishment are more fully considered in the essay on Hallam's *Constitutional History.*

[2] In 1655, after the rising of Penruddock and Grove, Cromwell divided England into twelve districts, placing over each a major-general with ample powers. The major-generals "decimated" (*i.e.*, levied an income tax of 10 per cent. upon) the notorious Royalists. After the assembling of a new Parliament in 1656 the major-generals were removed.

[3] Some of the primitive Quakers felt a call to testify in this manner.

[4] Enthusiasts who believed that the kingdom of Christ was about to be established forthwith. It was termed the fifth monarchy as following upon the four great monarchies spoken of in the Book of Daniel, which were understood to be the Assyrian, the Persian, the Grecian (*i.e.*, Macedonian) and the Roman, which still lingered on in the Holy Roman Empire.

Be it so. We are not careful to answer in this matter. These charges, were they infinitely more important, would not alter our opinion of an event which alone has made us to differ from the slaves who crouch beneath despotic sceptres. Many evils, no doubt, were produced by the civil war. They were the price of our liberty. Has the acquisition been worth the sacrifice? It is the nature of the Devil of tyranny to tear and rend the body which he leaves. Are the miseries of continued possession less horrible than the struggles of the tremendous exorcism?

If it were possible that a people brought up under an intolerant and arbitrary system could subvert that system without acts of cruelty and folly, half the objections to despotic power would be removed. We should, in that case, be compelled to acknowledge that it at least produces no pernicious effects on the intellectual and moral character of a nation. We deplore the outrages which accompany revolutions. But the more violent the outrages, the more assured we feel that a revolution was necessary. The violence of those outrages will always be proportioned to the ferocity and ignorance of the people; and the ferocity and ignorance of the people will be proportioned to the oppression and degradation under which they have been accustomed to live. Thus it was in our civil war. The heads of the church and state reaped only that which they had sown. The government had prohibited free discussion: it had done its best to keep the people unacquainted with their duties and their rights. The retribution was just and natural. If our rulers suffered from popular ignorance, it was because they had themselves taken away the key of knowledge. If they were assailed with blind fury, it was because they had exacted an equally blind submission.[2]

It is the character of such revolutions that we always see the worst of them at first. Till men have been some time free, they know not how to use their freedom. The natives of wine countries are generally sober. In climates where wine is a rarity intemperance abounds. A newly liberated people may be compared to a northern army encamped on the Rhine or the Xeres. It is said that, when soldiers in such a situation first find themselves able to indulge without restraint in such a rare and expensive luxury, nothing is to be seen but intoxication. Soon, however, plenty teaches discretion; and, after wine has been for a few months their daily fare, they become more temperate than they had ever been in their own country. In the same manner, the final and permanent fruits of liberty are wisdom, moderation, and mercy. Its immediate effects are often atrocious crimes, conflicting errors, scepticism on points the most clear, dogmatism on points the most mysterious. It is just at this crisis that its enemies love to exhibit it. They pull down the scaffolding from the half-finished edifice: they point to the flying dust, the falling bricks, the comfortless rooms, the frightful irregularity of the whole appearance; and then ask in scorn where the promised splendour and comfort is to be found. If such miserable sophisms were to prevail, there would never be a good house or a good government in the world.[1]

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[1] At the time of the Civil War the term agitator was used, not in its modern sense, but in the sense of agent. The soldiers of the Parliament elected in April, 1647, their first agitators or spokesmen who took a large part in the controversies which ended with the execution of Charles I. (see Gardiner, *History of the Civil War*, iii., 60).

[2] The government had not allowed freedom of discussion it is true; but no government allowed it at that time and the great majority of the Puritans would have condemned it. In 1648 the Long Parliament passed an ordinance making heresy and blasphemy capital.

Ariosto[2] tells a pretty story of a fairy, who, by some mysterious law of her nature, was condemned to appear at certain seasons in the form of a foul and poisonous snake. Those who injured her during the period of her disguise were for ever excluded from participation in the blessings which she bestowed. But to those who, in spite of her loathsome aspect, pitied and protected her, she afterwards revealed herself in the beautiful and celestial form which was natural to her, accompanied their steps, granted all their wishes, filled their houses with wealth, made them happy in love and victorious in war. Such a spirit is Liberty. At times she takes the form of a hateful reptile. She grovels, she hisses, she stings. But woe to those who in disgust shall venture to crush her! And happy are those who, having dared to receive her in her degraded and frightful shape, shall at length be rewarded by her in the time of her beauty and her glory!

There is only one cure for the evils which newly acquired freedom produces; and that cure is freedom. When a prisoner first leaves his cell he cannot bear the light of day: he is unable to discriminate colours, or recognise faces. But the remedy is, not to remand him into his dungeon, but to accustom him to the rays of the sun. The blaze of truth and liberty may at first dazzle and bewilder nations which have become half blind in the house of bondage. But let them gaze on, and they will soon be able to bear it. In a few years men learn to reason. The extreme violence of opinions subsides. Hostile theories correct each other. The scattered elements of truth cease to contend, and begin to coalesce. And at length a system of justice and order is educed out of the chaos.

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[1] The optimism of this passage is characteristic.

[2] *Orlando Furioso,* canto xliii., st. 78 *et seq.*

Many politicians of our time are in the habit of laying it down as a self-evident proposition, that no people ought to be free till they are fit to use their freedom. The maxim is worthy of the fool in the old story who resolved not to go into the water till he had learnt to swim. If men are to wait for liberty till they become wise and good in slavery, they may indeed wait for ever.

Therefore it is that we decidedly approve of the conduct of Milton and the other wise and good men who, in spite of much that was ridiculous and hateful in the conduct of their associates, stood firmly by the cause of Public Liberty. We are not aware that the poet has been charged with personal participation in any of the blameable excesses of that time. The favourite topic of his enemies is the line of conduct which he pursued with regard to the execution of the King. Of that celebrated proceeding we by no means approve. Still we must say, in justice to the many eminent persons who concurred in it, and in justice more particularly to the eminent person who defended it, that nothing can be more absurd than the imputations which, for the last hundred and sixty years, it has been the fashion to cast upon the Regicides. We have, throughout, abstained from appealing to first principles. We will not appeal to them now. We recur again to the parallel case of the Revolution. What essential distinction can be drawn between the execution of the father and the deposition of the son? What constitutional maxim is there which applies to the former and not to the latter? The King can do no wrong. If so, James was as innocent as Charles could have been. The minister only ought to be responsible for the acts of the Sovereign. If so, why not impeach Jefferies and retain James? The person of a King is sacred. Was the person of James considered sacred at the Boyne? To discharge cannon against an army in which a King is known to be posted is to approach pretty near to regicide. Charles, too, it should always be remembered, was put to death by men who had been exasperated by the hostilities of several years, and who had never been bound to him by any other tie than that which was common to them with all their fellow-citizens. Those who drove James from his throne, who seduced his army, who alienated his friends, who first imprisoned him in his palace, and then turned him out of it, who broke in upon his very slumbers by imperious messages, who pursued him with fire and sword from one part of the empire to another, who hanged, drew, and quartered his adherents, and attainted his innocent heir, were his nephew and his two daughters. When we reflect on all these things, we are at a loss to conceive how the same persons who, on the fifth of November, thank God for wonderfully conducting his servant William, and for making all opposition fall before him until he became our King and Governor, can, on the thirtieth of January,[1] contrive to be afraid that the blood of the Royal Martyr may be visited on themselves and their children.

We disapprove, we repeat, of the execution of Charles; not because the constitution exempts the King from responsibility, for we know that all such maxims, however excellent, have their exceptions; nor because we feel any peculiar interest in his character, for we think that his sentence describes him with perfect justice as "a tyrant, a traitor, a murderer, and a public enemy;" but because we are convinced that the measure was most injurious to the cause of freedom. He whom it removed was a captive and a hostage: his heir, to whom the allegiance of every Royalist was instantly transferred, was at large. The Presbyterians could never have been perfectly reconciled to the father: they had no such rooted enmity to the son. The great body of the people, also, contemplated that proceeding with feelings which, however unreasonable, no government could safely venture to outrage.

But though we think the conduct of the Regicides blameable, that of Milton appears to us in a very different light. The deed was done. It could not be undone. The evil was incurred; and the object was to render it as small as possible. We censure the chiefs of the army for not yielding to the popular opinion; but we cannot censure Milton for wishing to change that opinion. The very feeling which would have restrained us from committing the act would have led us, after it had been committed, to defend it against the ravings of servility and superstition. For the sake of public liberty, we wish that the thing had not been done, while the people disapproved of it. But, for the sake of public liberty, we should also have wished the people to approve of it when it was done. If any thing more were wanting to the justification of Milton, the book of Salmasius would furnish it. That miserable performance is now with justice considered only as a beacon to word-catchers, who wish to become statesmen. The celebrity of the man who refuted it, the "Æneæ magni dextra,"[1] gives it all its fame with the present generation. In that age the state of things was different. It was not then fully understood how vast an interval separates the mere classical scholar from the political philosopher. Nor can it be doubted that a treatise which, bearing the name of so eminent a critic, attacked the fundamental principles of all free governments, must, if suffered to remain unanswered, have produced a most pernicious effect on the public mind.[2]

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[1] Charles I. was executed on the 30th of January, 1649. William of Orange landed at Torbay on the 5th of November, 1688 (the anniversary of the discovery of the Gunpowder Plot). These events, as well as the restoration of Charles II. on the 29th of May, were commemorated in the Prayer-book by special forms of service which were not discontinued until the year 1859.

We wish to add a few words relative to another subject, on which the enemies of Milton delight to dwell, his conduct during the administration of the Protector. That an enthusiastic votary of liberty should accept office under a military usurper seems, no doubt, at first sight, extraordinary. But all the circumstances in which the country was then placed were extraordinary. The ambition of Oliver was of no vulgar kind. He never seems to have coveted despotic power.[3] He at first fought sincerely and manfully for the Parliament, and never deserted it, till it had deserted its duty. If he dissolved it by force, it was not till he found that the few members who remained after so many deaths, secessions, and expulsions, were desirous to appropriate to themselves a power which they held only in trust, and to inflict upon England the curse of a Venetian oligarchy. But even when thus placed by violence at the head of affairs, he did not assume unlimited power. He gave the country a constitution far more perfect than any which had at that time been known in the world. He reformed the representative system in a manner which has extorted praise even from Lord Clarendon. For himself he demanded indeed the first place in the commonwealth; but with powers scarcely so great as those of a Dutch stadtholder, or an American president. He gave the parliament a voice in the appointment of ministers, and left to it the whole legislative authority, not even reserving to himself a veto on its enactments; and he did not require that the chief magistracy should be hereditary in his family. Thus far, we think, if the circumstances of the time and the opportunities which he had of aggrandising himself be fairly considered, he will not lose by comparison with Washington or Bolivar.[1] Had his moderation been met by corresponding moderation, there is no reason to think that he would have overstepped the line which he had traced for himself. But when he found that his parliaments questioned the authority under which they met, and that he was in danger of being deprived of the restricted power which was absolutely necessary to his personal safety, then, it must be acknowledged, he adopted a more arbitrary policy.

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[1] "Hoc tamen infelix miseram solabere mortem
Æneæ magni dextra cadis."

—*Æneid*, x., lines 829-830.

[2] See p. 8. It may be doubted whether the work of Salmasius was likely to have so serious an effect. Young authors commonly overrate the influence of books.

[3] Macaulay showed in his appreciation of Cromwell more historical insight than might have been expected from so orthodox a Whig. Compare the estimate of Cromwell in the essay on Hallam's *Constitutional History*.

Yet, though we believe that the intentions of Cromwell were at first honest, though we believe that he was driven from the noble course which he had marked out for himself by the almost irresistible force of circumstances, though we admire, in common with all men of all parties, the ability and energy of his splendid administration, we are not pleading for arbitrary and lawless power, even in his hands. We know that a good constitution is infinitely better than the best despot. But we suspect, that at the time of which we speak, the violence of religious and political enmities rendered a stable and happy settlement next to impossible. The choice lay, not between Cromwell and liberty, but between Cromwell and the Stuarts. That Milton chose well, no man can doubt who fairly compares the events of the protectorate with those of the thirty years which succeeded it, the darkest and most disgraceful in the English annals. Cromwell was evidently laying, though in an irregular manner, the foundations of an admirable system. Never before had religious liberty and the freedom of discussion been enjoyed in a greater degree. Never had the national honour been better upheld abroad, or the seat of justice better filled at home. And it was rarely that any opposition which stopped short of open rebellion provoked the resentment of the liberal and magnanimous usurper. The institutions which he had established, as set down in the Instrument of Government, and the Humble Petition and Advice, were excellent.[1] His practice, it is true, too often departed from the theory of these institutions. But, had he lived a few years longer, it is probable that his institutions would have survived him, and that his arbitrary practice would have died with him. His power had not been consecrated by ancient prejudices. It was upheld only by his great personal qualities. Little, therefore, was to be dreaded from a second protector, unless he were also a second Oliver Cromwell. The events which followed his decease are the most complete vindication of those who exerted themselves to uphold his authority. His death dissolved the whole frame of society. The army rose against the parliament, the different corps of the army against each other. Sect raved against sect. Party plotted against party. The Presbyterians, in their eagerness to be revenged on the Independents, sacrificed their own liberty, and deserted all their old principles. Without casting one glance on the past, or requiring one stipulation for the future, they threw down their freedom at the feet of the most frivolous and heartless of tyrants.

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[1] Simon Bolivar, 1783-1830, a native of Caracas in Venezuela, who took part in the first revolt of the Spanish colonies in America against the mother country. He became Commander-in-Chief of the insurgent forces in Venezuela and New Granada and President of the Republic of Colombia formed by the union of these countries. He then assisted in the liberation of Ecuador and Peru, part of which becoming a separate state was named Bolivia in his honour. His noble and disinterested character and his services to the colonies both as a soldier and as a statesman suggested the parallel with Washington. The insurgents inspired much sympathy in England, where hopes were entertained for the South American Republics which have not been fulfilled.

Then came those days, never to be recalled without a blush, the days of servitude without loyalty and sensuality without love, of dwarfish talents and gigantic vices, the paradise of cold hearts and narrow minds, the golden age of the coward, the bigot, and the slave. The King cringed to his rival that he might trample on his people, sank into a viceroy of France, and pocketed, with complacent infamy, her degrading insults, and her more degrading gold. The caresses of harlots, and the jests of buffoons, regulated the policy of the state. The government had just ability enough to deceive, and just religion enough to persecute. The principles of liberty were the scoff of every grinning courtier, and the Anathema Maranatha of every fawning dean. In every high place, worship was paid to Charles and James, Belial and Moloch ; and England propitiated those obscene and cruel idols with the blood of her best and bravest children. Crime succeeded to crime, and disgrace to disgrace, till the race accursed of God and man was a second time driven forth, to wander on the face of the earth, and to be a by-word and a shaking of the head to the nations.

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[1] The Instrument of Government was the constitution framed by the council of officers after the dissolution of the so-called Barebones Parliament in December, 1653. In virtue of the Instrument Cromwell assumed the office of Protector. He was to be assisted by counsellors chosen in Parliament, and Parliament was to be reformed by the suppression of petty boroughs and the establishment of a uniform franchise. The Humble Petition and Advice was the supplementary instrument tendered to the Protector by his second Parliament in 1656, giving him power to form an Upper House and to name his successor.

Most of the remarks which we have hitherto made on the public character of Milton, apply to him only as one of a large body. We shall proceed to notice some of the peculiarities which distinguished him from his contemporaries. And, for that purpose, it is necessary to take a short survey of the parties into which the political world was at that time divided. We must premise, that our observations are intended to apply only to those who adhered, from a sincere preference, to one or to the other side. In days of public commotion, every faction, like an Oriental army, is attended by a crowd of camp-followers, an useless and heartless rabble, who prowl round its line of march in the hope of picking up something under its protection, but desert it in the day of battle, and often join to exterminate it after a defeat. England, at the time of which we are treating, abounded with fickle and selfish politicians, who transferred their support to every government as it rose, who kissed the hand of the King in 1640, and spat in his face in 1649, who shouted with equal glee when Cromwell was inaugurated in Westminster Hall, and when he was dug up to be hanged at Tyburn, who dined on calves' heads, or stuck up oak-branches, as circumstances altered, without the slightest shame or repugnance. These we leave out of the account. We take our estimate of parties from those who really deserve to be called partisans.

We would speak first of the Puritans, the most remarkable body of men, perhaps, which the world has ever produced. The odious and ridiculous parts of their character lie on the surface. He that runs may read them; nor have there been wanting attentive and malicious observers to point them out. For many years after the Restoration, they were the theme of unmeasured invective and derision. They were exposed to the utmost licentiousness of the press and of the stage, at the time when the press and the stage were most licentious. They were not men of letters; they were, as a body, unpopular; they could not defend themselves; and the public would not take them under its protection. They were therefore abandoned, without reserve, to the tender mercies of the satirists and dramatists. The ostentatious simplicity of their dress, their sour aspect, their nasal twang, their stiff posture, their long graces, their Hebrew names, the Scriptural phrases which they introduced on every occasion, their contempt of human learning, their detestation of polite amusements, were indeed fair game for the laughers. But it is not from the laughers alone that the philosophy of history is to be learnt. And he who approaches this subject should carefully guard against the influence of that potent ridicule which has already misled so many excellent writers.

> "Ecco il fonte del riso, ed ecco il rio
> Che mortali perigli in se contiene:
> Or qui tener a fren nostro desio,
> Ed esser cauti molto a noi conviene."[1]

Those who roused the people to resistance, who directed their measures through a long series of eventful years, who formed, out of the most unpromising materials, the finest army that Europe had ever seen, who trampled down King, Church, and Aristocracy, who, in the short intervals of domestic sedition and rebellion, made the name of England terrible to every nation on the face of the earth, were no vulgar fanatics. Most of their absurdities were mere external badges, like the signs of freemasonry, or the dresses of friars. We regret that these badges were not more attractive. We regret that a body to whose courage and talents mankind has owed inestimable obligations had not the lofty elegance which distinguished some of the adherents of Charles the First, or the easy good-breeding for which the court of Charles the Second was celebrated. But, if we must make our choice, we shall, like Bassanio in the play, turn from the specious caskets which contain only the Death's head and the Fool's head, and fix on the plain leaden chest which conceals the treasure.[2]

The Puritans were men whose minds had derived a peculiar character from the daily contemplation of superior beings and eternal interests. Not content with acknowledging, in general terms, an overruling Providence, they habitually ascribed every event to the will of the Great Being, for whose power nothing was too vast, for whose inspection nothing was too minute. To know him, to serve him, to enjoy him, was with them the great end of existence. They rejected with contempt the ceremonious homage which other sects substituted for the pure worship of the soul. Instead of catching occasional glimpses of the Deity through an obscuring veil, they aspired to gaze full on his intolerable brightness, and to commune with him face to face. Hence originated their contempt for terrestrial distinctions. The difference between the greatest and the meanest of mankind seemed to vanish, when compared with the boundless interval which separated the whole race from him on whom their own eyes were constantly fixed. They recognised no title to superiority but his favour; and, confident of that favour, they despised all the accomplishments and all the dignities of the world. If they were unacquainted with the works of philosophers and poets, they were deeply read in the oracles of God. If their names were not found in the registers of heralds, they were recorded in the Book of Life. If their steps were not accompanied by a splendid train of menials, legions of ministering angels had charge over them. Their palaces were houses not made with hands; their diadems crowns of glory which should never fade away. On the rich and the eloquent, on nobles and priests, they looked down with contempt: for they esteemed themselves rich in a more precious treasure, and eloquent in a more sublime language, nobles by the right of an earlier creation, and priests by the imposition of a mightier hand. The very meanest of them was a being to whose fate a mysterious and terrible importance belonged, on whose slightest action the spirits of light and darkness looked with anxious interest, who had been destined, before heaven and earth were created, to enjoy a felicity which should continue when heaven and earth should have passed away. Events which short-sighted politicians ascribed to earthly causes, had been ordained on his account. For his sake empires had risen, and flourished, and decayed. For his sake the Almighty had proclaimed his will by the pen of the Evangelist, and the harp of the prophet. He had been wrested by no common deliverer from the grasp of no common foe. He had been ransomed by the sweat of no vulgar agony, by the blood of no earthly sacrifice. It was for him that the sun had been darkened, that the rocks had been rent, that the dead had risen, that all nature had shuddered at the sufferings of her expiring God.

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[1] "Here is the fount of laughter and here the stream that contains deadly perils within; here to keep our desire under rein and to be wary much befits us" (Tasso, *Jerusalem Delivered*, canto xv., st. 57).

Not accurately quoted. The original runs:—

> "Ecco il fonte del riso, ed ecco il rio
> Che mortali perigli in se contiene:
> Dissero: or qui frenar nostro desio,
> Ed esser cauti molto a noi conviene."

[2] "Merchant of Venice," act iii., scene 2.

Thus the Puritan was made up of two different men, the one all self-abasement, penitence, gratitude, passion; the other proud, calm, inflexible, sagacious. He prostrated himself in the dust before his Maker: but he set his foot on the neck of his king. In his devotional retirement, he prayed with convulsions, and groans, and tears. He was half-maddened by glorious or terrible illusions. He heard the lyres of angels or the tempting whispers of fiends. He caught a gleam of the Beatific Vision, or woke screaming from dreams of everlasting fire. Like Vane,[1] he thought himself intrusted with the sceptre of the millennial year. Like Fleetwood,[2] he cried in the bitterness of his soul that God had hid his face from him. But when he took his seat in the council, or girt on his sword for war, these tempestuous workings of the soul had left no perceptible trace behind them. People who saw nothing of the godly but their uncouth visages, and heard nothing from them but their groans and their whining hymns, might laugh at them. But those had little reason to laugh who encountered them in the hall of debate or in the field of battle. These fanatics brought to civil and military affairs a coolness of judgment and an immutability of purpose which some writers have thought inconsistent with their religious zeal, but which were in fact the necessary effects of it. The intensity of their feelings on one subject made them tranquil on every other. One overpowering sentiment had subjected to itself pity and hatred, ambition and fear. Death had lost its terrors and pleasure its charms. They had their smiles and their tears, their raptures and their sorrows, but not for the things of this world. Enthusiasm had made them Stoics, had cleared their minds from every vulgar passion and prejudice,[3] and raised them above the influence of danger and of corruption. It sometimes might lead them to pursue unwise ends, but never to choose unwise means. They went through the world, like Sir Artegal's iron man Talus with his flail,[1] crushing and trampling down oppressors, mingling with human beings, but having neither part nor lot in human infirmities, insensible to fatigue, to pleasure, and to pain, not to be pierced by any weapon, not to be withstood by any barrier.

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[1] Henry Vane, Sir, the younger, 1613-1662, was a singular combination of the statesman and the mystic. When only fifteen he was converted to Puritanism. In 1635 his desire for spiritual freedom led him to visit America, where he was elected Governor of Massachusetts, but failing to satisfy the colonists he returned to England in 1637. He took a conspicuous part in the Long Parliament, showed high administrative capacity as Treasurer of the Navy and was the intimate friend of Cromwell until the expulsion of the Rump. After the Restoration he was condemned and executed as a traitor. According to Clarendon "he did at some time believe that he was the person deputed to reign over the saints upon earth for a thousand years" (*History of the Rebellion*, xvi., 88).

[2] Charles Fleetwood (date of birth unknown), died in 1692, who enlisted in the Parliamentary army in 1642, rose successively to be Lieutenant-General of the Horse to Cromwell, Commander-in-Chief and Lord Deputy in Ireland, and after Cromwell's death Commander-in-Chief in England. He married a daughter of Cromwell, and sat in the Cromwellian House of Lords, but never showed any political aptitude. His enthusiastic temper is mentioned by several writers. "If his pious rhapsodies were not heard he reconciled it by saying that 'God had spit in his face and would not hear him'" (Noble, *Memoirs of the House of Cromwell*, ii., 361).

[3] Macaulay here falls into the error which so many of the enemies of the Puritans have committed in forgetting the variety of characters comprehended under the

Such we believe to have been the character of the Puritans. We perceive the absurdity of their manners. We dislike the sullen gloom of their domestic habits. We acknowledge that the tone of their minds was often injured by straining after things too high for mortal reach: and we know that, in spite of their hatred of Popery, they too often fell into the worst vices of that bad system, intolerance and extravagant austerity, that they had their anchorites and their crusades, their Dunstans[2] and their De Montforts,[3] their Dominics[4] and their Escobars.[5] Yet, when all circumstances are taken into consideration, we do not hesitate to pronounce them a brave, a wise, an honest, and an useful body.

The Puritans espoused the cause of civil liberty mainly because it was the cause of religion. There was another party, by no means numerous, but distinguished by learning and ability, which acted with them on very different principles.

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name. Whatever may be true of the noblest Puritans the rank and file had not been purified of every vulgar passion and prejudice. They had their full portion of unreasoning orthodoxy, of narrowness and intolerance. The Puritan treatment of Ireland can scarcely be preferred to the Caroline system in Scotland. The sway of the kirk in Scotland was at least as tyrannical as that of the bishops in England.

[1] *Faerie Queene*, book v.

[2] This paragraph is somewhat inconsistent with the one before and the illustrations are thrown in somewhat at random. Dunstan appears to have had little of the fanatic in his composition. He was a statesman rather than an enthusiast.

[3] Simon de Montfort, father of the well-known statesman, was the principal leader of the crusade against the Albigenses, in which he committed hideous cruelties and gained great riches.

[4] Dominic de Guzman, better known as St. Dominic, 1170-1221, the founder of the Dominican Order of Friars, was erroneously supposed to have founded the Inquisition. So far as we know he only laboured as a preacher and missionary. "The legend which has grown around Dominic represents him as one of the chief causes of the overthrow of the Albigensian heresies. Doubtless he did all that an earnest and single-hearted man could do in a cause to which he had surrendered himself, but historically his influence was imperceptible" (Lea, *History of the Inquisition*, i., 249).

[5] Antonio Escobar Y Mendoza, 1589-1669, one of the most eminent among Jesuit casuists, was accused, especially by Pascal in the *Provincial Letters*, of paring away morality by frivolous distinctions and dishonest refinements.

We speak of those whom Cromwell was accustomed to call the Heathens, men who were, in the phraseology of that time, doubting Thomases or careless Gallios with regard to religious subjects, but passionate worshippers of freedom. Heated by the study of ancient literature, they set up their country as their idol, and proposed to themselves the heroes of Plutarch as their examples. They seem to have borne some resemblance to the Brissotines of the French Revolution.[1] But it is not very easy to draw the line of distinction between them and their devout associates, whose tone and manner they sometimes found it convenient to affect, and sometimes, it is probable, imperceptibly adopted.

We now come to the Royalists. We shall attempt to speak of them, as we have spoken of their antagonists, with perfect candour. We shall not charge upon a whole party the profligacy and baseness of the horseboys, gamblers and bravoes, whom the hope of license and plunder attracted from all the dens of Whitefriars to the standard of Charles, and who disgraced their associates by excesses which, under the stricter discipline of the Parliamentary armies, were never tolerated.[2] We will select a more favourable specimen. Thinking as we do that the cause of the King was the cause of bigotry and tyranny, we yet cannot refrain from looking with complacency on the character of the honest old Cavaliers. We feel a national pride in comparing them with the instruments which the despots of other countries are compelled to employ, with the mutes who throng their ante-chambers, and the Janissaries who mount guard at their gates. Our royalist countrymen were not heartless, dangling courtiers, bowing at every step, and simpering at every word. They were not mere machines for destruction dressed up in uniforms, caned into skill, intoxicated into valour, defending without love, destroying without hatred. There was a freedom in their subserviency, a nobleness in their very degradation. The sentiment of individual independence was strong within them. They were indeed misled, but by no base or selfish motive.

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[1] So-called from Jean Pierre Brissot de Warville, 1754-1793, who belonged to the Girondist party in the first French Revolution and gained distinction as an orator and pamphleteer. The Girondists bore but a distant resemblance to any party in the civil commotions of England. Classical and republican enthusiasm amongst Englishmen was more or less tempered by political experience and by the national distrust of general maxims; but in France neither of these checks was felt.

[2] Yet some of the most cruel acts which dishonour the Civil War, *e.g.*, the massacre of a number of Irish women after the battle of Naseby, were committed by the Parliamentarians.

Compassion and romantic honour, the prejudices of childhood, and the venerable names of history, threw over them a spell potent as that of Duessa; and, like the Red-Cross Knight, they thought that they were doing battle for an injured beauty, while they defended a false and loathsome sorceress.[1] In truth they scarcely entered at all into the merits of the political question. It was not for a treacherous king or an intolerant church that they fought, but for the old banner which had waved in so many battles over the heads of their fathers, and for the altars at which they had received the hands of their brides. Though nothing could be more erroneous than their political opinions, they possessed, in a far greater degree than their adversaries, those qualities which are the grace of private life. With many of the vices of the Round Table, they had also many of its virtues, courtesy, generosity, veracity, tenderness, and respect for women. They had far more both of profound and of polite learning than the Puritans. Their manners were more engaging, their tempers more amiable, their tastes more elegant, and their households more cheerful.[2]

Milton did not strictly belong to any of the classes which we have described. He was not a Puritan. He was not a freethinker. He was not a Royalist. In his character the noblest qualities of every party were combined in harmonious union. From the Parliament and from the Court, from the conventicle and from the Gothic cloister, from the gloomy and sepulchral circles of the Roundheads, and from the Christmas revel of the hospitable Cavalier, his nature selected and drew to itself whatever was great and good, while it rejected all the base and pernicious ingredients by which those finer elements were defiled. Like the Puritans, he lived

> "As ever in his great task-master's eye."[3]

Like them, he kept his mind continually fixed on an Almighty Judge and an eternal reward. And hence he acquired their contempt of external circumstances, their fortitude, their tranquillity, their inflexible resolution. But not the coolest sceptic or the most profane scoffer was more perfectly free from the contagion of their frantic delusions, their savage manners, their ludicrous jargon, their scorn of science, and their aversion to pleasure.[1] Hating tyranny with a perfect hatred, he had nevertheless all the estimable and ornamental qualities which were almost entirely monopolised by the party of the tyrant. There was none who had a stronger sense of the value of literature, a finer relish for every elegant amusement, or a more chivalrous delicacy of honour and love. Though his opinions were democratic, his tastes and his associations were such as harmonise best with monarchy and aristocracy. He was under the influence of all the feelings by which the gallant Cavaliers were misled. But of those feelings he was the master and not the slave. Like the hero of Homer, he enjoyed all the pleasures of fascination; but he was not fascinated. He listened to the song of the Syrens; yet he glided by without being seduced to their fatal shore. He tasted the cup of Circe; but he bore about him a sure antidote against the effects of its bewitching sweetness. The illusions which captivated his imagination never impaired his reasoning powers. The statesman was proof against the splendour, the solemnity, and the romance which enchanted the poet. Any person who will contrast the sentiments expressed in his treatises on Prelacy with the exquisite lines on ecclesiastical architecture and music in the Penseroso, which was published about the same time, will understand our meaning.[2] This is an inconsistency which, more than any thing else, raises his character in our estimation, because it shows how many private tastes and feelings he sacrificed, in order to do what he considered his duty to mankind. It is the very struggle of the noble Othello. His heart relents; but his hand is firm. He does nought in hate, but all in honour. He kisses the beautiful deceiver before he destroys her.

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[1] *Faerie Queene*, book i.

[2] If the Cavaliers had the superiority in all these respects, the conflict could not have been one of absolute good with absolute evil.

[3] Sonnet ii.

That from which the public character of Milton derives its great and peculiar splendour, still remains to be mentioned. If he exerted himself to overthrow a forsworn king and a persecuting hierarchy, he exerted himself in conjunction with others. But the glory of the battle which he fought for the species of freedom which is the most valuable, and which was then the least understood, the freedom of the human mind, is all his own.[3] Thousands and tens of thousands among his contemporaries raised their voices against Ship-money and the Star-chamber. But there were few indeed who discerned the more fearful evils of moral and intellectual slavery, and the benefits which would result from the liberty of the press and the unfettered exercise of private judgment. These were the objects which Milton justly conceived to be the most important. He was desirous that the people should think for themselves as well as tax themselves, and should be emancipated from the dominion of prejudice as well as from that of Charles. He knew that those who, with the best intentions, overlooked these schemes of reform, and contented themselves with pulling down the King and imprisoning the malignants, acted like the heedless brothers in his own poem, who, in their eagerness to disperse the train of the sorcerer, neglected the means of liberating the captive. They thought only of conquering when they should have thought of disenchanting.

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[1] Yet Milton the controversialist could occasionally stoop to flatter prejudices which he above all men should have despised.

[2] The contrast between the poet and the theologian.

[3] There is much truth in this, but it tacitly acknowledges those defects of the average Puritan which Macaulay has hitherto ignored.

> "Oh, ye mistook! Ye should have snatched his wand
> And bound him fast. Without the rod reversed,
> And backward mutters of dissevering power,
> We cannot free the lady that sits here
> Bound in strong fetters fixed and motionless."[1]

To reverse the rod, to spell the charm backward, to break the ties which bound a stupefied people to the seat of enchantment, was the noble aim of Milton. To this all his public conduct was directed. For this he joined the Presbyterians; for this he forsook them. He fought their perilous battle; but he turned away with disdain from their insolent triumph. He saw that they, like those whom they had vanquished, were hostile to the liberty of thought. He therefore joined the Independents, and called upon Cromwell to break the secular chain, and to save free conscience from the paw of the Presbyterian wolf.[2] With a view to the same great object, he attacked the licensing system, in that sublime treatise which every statesman should wear as a sign upon his hand and as frontlets between his eyes.[3] His attacks were, in general, directed less against particular abuses than against those deeply-seated errors on which almost all abuses are founded, the servile worship of eminent men and the irrational dread of innovation.

That he might shake the foundations of these debasing sentiments more effectually, he always selected for himself the boldest literary services. He never came up in the rear, when the outworks had been carried and the breach entered. He pressed into the forlorn hope. At the beginning of the changes, he wrote with incomparable energy and eloquence against the bishops. But, when his opinion seemed likely to prevail, he passed on to other subjects, and abandoned prelacy to the crowd of writers who now hastened to insult a falling party. There is no more hazardous enterprise than that of bearing the torch of truth into those dark and infected recesses in which no light has ever shone. But it was the choice and the pleasure of Milton to penetrate the noisome vapours, and to brave the terrible explosion. Those who most disapprove of his opinions must respect the hardihood with which he maintained them. He, in general, left to others the credit of expounding and defending the popular parts of his religious and political creed. He took his own stand upon those which the great body of his countrymen reprobated as criminal, or derided as paradoxical. He stood up for divorce and regicide. He attacked the prevailing systems of education. His radiant and beneficent career resembled that of the god of light and fertility.[1]

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[1] *Comus*, lines 815-819, the last misquoted:—
"In stony fetters fixed and motionless."

[2] Sonnet xvi.

[3] The *Areopagitica*.

> "Nitor in adversum; nec me, qui cætera, vincit
> Impetus, et rapido contrarius evehor orbi."[2]

It is to be regretted that the prose writings of Milton should, in our time, be so little read. As compositions, they deserve the attention of every man who wishes to become acquainted with the full power of the English language. They abound with passages compared with which the finest declamations of Burke sink into insignificance. They are a perfect field of cloth of gold. The style is stiff with gorgeous embroidery. Not even in the earlier books of the Paradise Lost has the great poet ever risen higher than in those parts of his controversial works in which his feelings, excited by conflict, find a vent in bursts of devotional and lyric rapture. It is, to borrow his own majestic language, "a sevenfold chorus of hallelujahs and harping symphonies."[3]

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[1] This is the very false gallop of rhetoric, Milton's zeal and sincerity are not to be questioned. But in his controversial writings he is rarely or never the tranquil seeker after truth. He is a militant theologian, using methods by which truth can never be attained, and too often indulging in rude and scurrilous appeals to passion. It is not surprising therefore that, despite his genius and his high courage, he has contributed almost nothing to the lasting treasures of human wisdom. No man less resembles the god of light and fertility than the party pamphleteer.

[2] Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, book ii., lines 72, 73.

[3] "And the Apocalypse of St. John is the majestic image of a high and stately tragedy shutting up and intermingling her solemn scenes and acts with a sevenfold

We had intended to look more closely at these performances, to analyse the peculiarities of the diction, to dwell at some length on the sublime wisdom of the Areopagitica and the nervous rhetoric of the Iconoclast, and to point out some of those magnificent passages which occur in the Treatise of Reformation, and the Animadversions on the Remonstrant. But the length to which our remarks have already extended renders this impossible.

We must conclude. And yet we can scarcely tear ourselves away from the subject. The days immediately following the publication of this relic of Milton appear to be peculiarly set apart, and consecrated to his memory. And we shall scarcely be censured if, on this his festival, we be found lingering near his shrine, how worthless soever may be the offering which we bring to it. While this book lies on our table, we seem to be contemporaries of the writer. We are transported a hundred and fifty years back. We can almost fancy that we are visiting him in his small lodging; that we see him sitting at the old organ beneath the faded green hangings; that we can catch the quick twinkle of his eyes, rolling in vain to find the day; that we are reading in the lines of his noble countenance the proud and mournful history of his glory and his affliction.[1] We image to ourselves the breathless silence in which we should listen to his slightest word, the passionate veneration with which we should kneel to kiss his hand and weep upon it, the earnestness with which we should endeavour to console him, if indeed such a spirit could need consolation, for the neglect of an age unworthy of his talents and his virtues, the eagerness with which we should contest with his daughters, or with his Quaker friend Elwood, the privilege of reading Homer to him, or of taking down the immortal accents which flowed from his lips.

These are perhaps foolish feelings. Yet we cannot be ashamed of them; nor shall we be sorry if what we have written shall in any degree excite them in other minds. We are not much in

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chorus of hallelujahs and harping symphonies" (*The Reason of Church Government*, book ii.). Many passages in Milton's prose works are worthy of the highest admiration and hardly inferior to his noblest poetry. But none of his prose works, not even the *Areopagitica*, can be praised as a whole without grave reservations. They lack unity of design, harmony of proportion, argumentative method, clearness, terseness and simplicity of style. No kind of writing is really admirable which is not adapted to its purpose, and Milton's pamphlets are not adapted to the purpose of polemical writing—to convince.

[1] This picture of Milton in his old age is taken from reminiscences preserved by Jonathan Richardson in the *Life of Milton* which he prefixed to some notes on *Paradise Lost*, published in 1734.

the habit of idolizing either the living or the dead. And we think that there is no more certain indication of a weak and ill-regulated intellect than that propensity which, for want of a better name, we will venture to christen Boswellism.[1] But there are a few characters which have stood the closest scrutiny and the severest tests, which have been tried in the furnace and have proved pure, which have been weighed in the balance and have not been found wanting, which have been declared sterling by the general consent of mankind, and which are visibly stamped with the image and superscription of the Most High. These great men we trust that we know how to prize; and of these was Milton. The sight of his books, the sound of his name, are pleasant to us. His thoughts resemble those celestial fruits and flowers which the Virgin Martyr of Massinger sent down from the gardens of Paradise to the earth, and which were distinguished from the productions of other soils, not only by superior bloom and sweetness, but by miraculous efficacy to invigorate and to heal. They are powerful, not only to delight, but to elevate and purify. Nor do we envy the man who can study either the life or the writings of the great poet and patriot, without aspiring to emulate, not indeed the sublime works with which his genius has enriched our literature, but the zeal with which he laboured for the public good, the fortitude with which he endured every private calamity, the lofty disdain with which he looked down on temptations and dangers, the deadly hatred which he bore to bigots and tyrants, and the faith which he so sternly kept with his country and with his fame.

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[1] A recurring idea in the essays. "Biographers are peculiarly exposed to the *lues Boswelliana*" (essay on William Pitt).

MACHIAVELLI

MARCH, 1827

NOTE ON THE ESSAY

MACAULAY'S essay upon Machiavelli is, according to Professor Villari, the first attempt towards a serious and comprehensive criticism of Machiavelli's character and writings. During the last seventy years much has been written about Machiavelli, yet Macaulay's essay is still worth reading. Machiavelli had been reviled for three centuries, but had been little read and less understood. Macaulay had read not only *The Prince*, but all Machiavelli's writings, and sought to interpret the seeming paradoxes and contradictions which they offer by reference to the history of those times and to the political condition of Italy. As he was well grounded in Italian literature and could derive from books sensations more vivid than ordinary men derive from travel, he wrote about Italian life and politics with a freshness and vivacity truly surprising in one who had never visited Italy. Professor Villari remarks that Macaulay was the first to appreciate the pictures of individual and national character, and the wealth of historical information to be found in Machiavelli's official despatches, the first also to recognise Machiavelli's originality in trying to create for the Florentine Republic a native militia. Even more remarkable in a foreigner appears to him Macaulay's keen perception of Machiavelli's literary excellence.

When we pass from Macaulay's literary and historical criticism of Machiavelli to his psychological analysis of the Italians of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Signor Villari finds less to praise. Macaulay, he thinks, was an incomparable narrator but a superficial philosopher. The moral contradiction which runs through Machiavelli's writings Macaulay seeks to explain by tracing a similar contradiction in the character of the Italians of that age generally. Signor Villari calls in doubt Macaulay's description of the national character, although if we look chiefly to those classes which took part in public affairs and allow for Macaulay's trick of emphatic statement much might be said in his defence. Even were Macaulay's general estimate of the Italians just, we should be left, Signor Villari observes, with two enigmas to resolve instead of one. This is hardly fair to Macaulay, who does offer a plausible explanation of the peculiar moral type then so common in Italy. Signor Villari also complains that Macaulay has allotted too little space to the examination of the works upon which Machiavelli's fame and influence are based. He has run through four-fifths of his essay before touching upon *The Prince*, the *Discourses*, on *The Art of War*, and has to crowd his remarks upon them into a few paragraphs. The *History of Florence* he regards as having a merely literary value, whereas it stands in close connection with those works as an original attempt to trace the natural growth of political parties and the influence which they exert upon the form of the political constitution. Here again we might, without wholly absolving Macaulay, plead that he had to bring before readers mostly ill acquainted with Italian history the conditions under which Machiavelli wrote and had no space for minute examination of separate writings.

Much, very much of course, has to be added to Macaulay's swift sketch of the peculiarities of Italian politics in the age of the Renaissance. Professor Villari has shown that the Italian States of that time were weak, not merely because they were small, but because they were ill organised. When the overthrow of the imperial power in the thirteenth century left the cities virtually independent, it also left them unprotected, so that each had to fight for its own freedom, and if possible to secure itself by enlarging its territory. But inasmuch as the persons having political power in an Italian city exercised it like the citizens of a Greek republic, not through representatives but directly, unity and order required that the ruling class should be kept small, a necessity which had nothing disagreeable to those who were in possession. The enlargement of the territory was never followed by the wider diffusion of political power. A great part of the inhabitants of each free city, all the peasants in the surrounding country and all the citizens of the subject towns were entirely debarred from political activity, which in Venice was reserved to a few hundred and even in Florence to a few thousand persons. Even this comparatively small part of the commonwealth everywhere save in Venice was divided against itself by the jealousy between guild and guild, by the rancour between kindred and kindred, by factions none the less bitter and unscrupulous because the matter of contention out of which they first arose had long been unmeaning or forgotten. Under such unstable conditions liberty was often suppressed and absolute monarchy established by bold adventurers who rose even from the lowest station, and by means of terror or self-interest obtained obedience although they could scarcely ever inspire loyalty. The internal history of many cities was but a series of revolutions whilst their external relations were for ever changing. Meantime traditional beliefs and primitive virtues were weakened by the growth of riches and of a new intellectual life. Patriotism very generally dwindled whilst all things seemed possible to the clever and unscrupulous. When, therefore, Italy was assailed by foreigners its only hope of safety lay in concentration, and concentration seemed possible only by the agency of some great individual. The old republics were incapable of absorbing those whom they had conquered or of lasting union with each other. The Popes were always hostile to the rise of a really strong power in Italy which must have ended their own temporal dominion. Under these conditions Machiavelli wrote. He saw that the disorder of Italy exposed it to be overrun, pillaged and enslaved by every warlike neighbour, and that this disorder was too inveterate to be remedied save by force.

Machiavelli held that popular government was the best for settled times, but that the reconstruction of a decrepit society must be the work of a man of genius. He was, therefore, a partisan in one sense of despotism, in another of democracy. The choice of political forms must be determined by the political end. With regard to morality, Machiavelli, as Macaulay has well insisted, is far from uniformly cynical. Often he writes with a moral enthusiasm which seems to have been quite honest. The prince should entrust his safety to national troops, not to mercenaries, should administer economically, cherish the poor, respect the honour and the property of all his subjects and practice as much good faith and humanity as can consist with self-preservation. Machiavelli thinks indeed that even a man of genius cannot fulfil his task as ruler without occasional violations of the moral law, but if his end is the public good these are to be forgiven, in so far as they are necessary. In this respect Machiavelli is near akin to Carlyle who mentions him with contempt. Carlyle's doctrine of hero-worship appears to mean that the great man who really aims at the common good is morally justified in all that he does for that end. Machiavelli says that what he does will sometimes be immoral, but that it cannot be helped. Machiavelli's reputation for wickedness appears to have arisen from his candour in writing that which statesmen have too often acted. In the long list of worthies who have reformed or aggrandised states we shall find few who have not sometimes employed such means as in private life no noble mind would deign to use, and even adventurers would at least affect to condemn. A good many public men have thought that although honesty may generally be the best policy, great crimes are sometimes the truest wisdom. And when we turn from practice to theory Lord Acton will tell us in his preface to *The Prince* that an almost unbroken chain of theologians and moralists have for many centuries justified the worst crimes which Machiavelli allows to a ruler in difficult circumstances. Machiavelli, he tells us, "is the earliest conscious and articulate exponent of certain living forces in the present world. Religion, progressive enlightenment, the perpetual vigilance of public opinion have not reduced his empire, or disproved the justice of his conception of mankind. He obtains a new lease of authority from causes that are still prevailing and from doctrines that are apparent in politics, philosophy and science. Without sparing censure, or employing for comparison the grosser symptoms of the age, we find him near our common level and perceive that he is not a vanishing type, but a constant and contemporary influence. Where it is impossible to praise, to defend, or to excuse, the burden of blame may yet be lightened by adjustment and distribution, and he is more rationally intelligible when illustrated by lights falling not only from the century he wrote in, but from our own, which has seen the course of its history twenty-five times diverted by actual or attempted crime."

Niccolo Machiavelli was born at Florence on the 3rd of May, 1469. Very little is known of his early years or education, but in 1492 he entered the public service and in 1498 he became secretary to the administrative body known as The Ten of Liberty and Peace, a position which he continued to hold during the next fourteen years, the period of his greatest political activity. During these years he went on the various embassies mentioned by Macaulay. In 1506 he began to organise a native Florentine militia which failed under the test of actual war in 1512. After the restoration of the Medici in that year, Machiavelli would have been glad to have remained secretary, but was dismissed and soon afterwards imprisoned and tortured on suspicion of having conspired against the new Government. For fifteen years he was chiefly employed in study and in writing, although the friendship of Clement VII. at length opened a new prospect of political action. After the sack of Rome in 1527 and the consequent downfall of the Medici at Florence, Machiavelli interested himself in the restoration of the republic, but died at Florence on the 22nd of June before he had time to achieve anything.

Those who wish to pursue the suggestions given by Macaulay in the following essay will find in Professor Villari's *Life and Times of Machiavelli* and Mr. Burd's edition of *The Prince* not only an immense store of information, but copious notices of the ample literature which has been heaped upon Machiavelli and his works.

MACHIAVELLI

Œuvres complètes de MACHIAVEL, *traduites par* J. V. PÉRIER. Paris: 1825.

THOSE who have attended to the practice of our literary tribunal are well aware that, by means of certain legal fictions similar to those of Westminster Hall, we are frequently enabled to take cognisance of cases lying beyond the sphere of our original jurisdiction. We need hardly say, therefore, that in the present instance M. Périer[1] is merely a Richard Roe, who will not be mentioned in any subsequent stage of the proceedings, and whose name is used for the sole purpose of bringing Machiavelli into court.[2]

We doubt whether any name in literary history be so generally odious as that of the man whose character and writings we now propose to consider. The terms in which he is commonly described would seem to import that he was the Tempter, the Evil Principle, the discoverer of ambition and revenge, the original inventor of perjury, and that, before the publication of his fatal Prince, there had never been a hypocrite, a tyrant, or a traitor, a simulated virtue, or a convenient crime. One writer gravely assures us that Maurice of Saxony[3] learned all his fraudulent policy from that execrable volume. Another remarks that since it was translated into Turkish, the Sultans have been more addicted than formerly to the custom of strangling their brothers. Lord Lyttelton charges the poor Florentine with the manifold treasons of the house of Guise, and with the massacre of St. Bartholomew.[1] Several authors have hinted that the Gunpowder Plot is to be primarily attributed to his doctrines, and seem to think that his effigy ought to be substituted for that of Guy Faux, in those processions by which the ingenuous youth of England annually commemorate the preservation of the Three Estates. The Church of Rome has pronounced his works accursed things.[2] Nor have our own countrymen been backward in testifying their opinion of his merits. Out of his surname they have coined an epithet for a knave, and out of his Christian name a synonyme for the Devil.[3]

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[1] It should be Périès. Jean Vincent Périès, 1785-1829, was an official in the French Department of Fine Arts. Besides this version of Machiavelli's works he translated the *Orlando Furioso* and wrote some original verse.

[2] The old action of ejectment began with a declaration of the party suing that he had leased the land in question to John Doe who had been ousted by Richard Roe, and a notice by Richard Roe to the party really sued that as he, Richard Roe, had no title to the land the party sued must appear and defend his right, otherwise judgment would go by default.

[3] Maurice, 1521-1553, cousin of John Frederic the Elector of Saxony, although a Protestant, took part with the Emperor Charles V. against his fellow-Protestants, and was rewarded with the electorate which John Frederic had forfeited. Then, as the emperor did not gratify all his wishes, Maurice returned to the Protestant side, very nearly captured the emperor at Innsbruck and forced him to accept the Treaty of Passau which guaranteed freedom to the Protestants.

It is indeed scarcely possible for any person, not well acquainted with the history and literature of Italy, to read without horror and amazement the celebrated treatise which has brought so much obloquy on the name of Machiavelli. Such a display of wickedness, naked yet not ashamed, such cool, judicious, scientific atrocity, seemed rather to belong to a fiend than to the most depraved of men. Principles which the most hardened ruffian would scarcely hint to his most trusted accomplice, or avow, without the disguise of some palliating sophism, even to his own mind, are professed without the slightest circumlocution, and assumed as the fundamental axioms of all political science.

It is not strange that ordinary readers should regard the author of such a book as the most depraved and shameless of human beings. Wise men, however, have always been inclined to look with great suspicion on the angels and dæmons of the multitude: and in the present instance, several circumstances have led even superficial observers to question the justice of the vulgar decision. It is notorious that Machiavelli was, through life, a zealous republican. In the same year in which he composed his manual of King-craft, he suffered imprisonment and torture in the cause of public liberty. It seems inconceivable that the martyr of freedom should have designedly acted as the apostle of tyranny. Several eminent writers have, therefore, endeavoured to detect in this unfortunate performance some concealed meaning, more consistent with the character and conduct of the author than that which appears at the first glance.

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[1] For Lord Lyttelton, see vol. ii., p. 14. In one of his *Dialogues of the Dead* Henry, Duke of Guise, is made to charge upon Machiavelli's teaching all the crimes which he had himself committed in this life.

[2] Machiavelli's works were put on the *Index* by Paul IV. in 1559, and the sentence was confirmed in 1564 by Pius IV.

[3] AUTHOR'S FOOTNOTE.—Nick Machiavel had ne'er a trick,
Tho' he gave his name to our old Nick.
Hudibras, Part III., Canto I.

But, we believe, there is a schism on this subject among the antiquarians.

One hypothesis is that Machiavelli intended to practise on the young Lorenzo de Medici a fraud similar to that which Sunderland is said to have employed against our James the Second, and that he urged his pupil to violent and perfidious measures, as the surest means of accelerating the moment of deliverance and revenge.[1] Another supposition which Lord Bacon seems to countenance, is that the treatise was merely a piece of grave irony, intended to warn nations against the arts of ambitious men.[2] It would be easy to show that neither of these solutions is consistent with many passages in The Prince itself. But the most decisive refutation is that which is furnished by the other works of Machiavelli. In all the writings which he gave to the public, and in all those which the research of editors has, in the course of three centuries, discovered, in his Comedies, designed for the entertainment of the multitude, in his Comments on Livy, intended for the perusal of the most enthusiastic patriots of Florence, in his History, inscribed to one of the most amiable and estimable of the Popes,[3] in his public despatches, in his private memoranda, the same obliquity of moral principle for which The Prince is so severely censured is more or less discernible. We doubt whether it would be possible to find, in all the many volumes of his compositions, a single expression indicating that dissimulation and treachery had ever struck him as discreditable.

After this, it may seem ridiculous to say that we are acquainted with few writings which exhibit so much elevation of sentiment, so pure and warm a zeal for the public good, or so just a view of the duties and rights of citizens, as those of Machiavelli. Yet so it is. And even from The Prince itself we could select many passages in support of this remark. To a reader of our age and country this inconsistency is, at first, perfectly bewildering. The whole man seems to be an enigma, a grotesque assemblage of incongruous qualities, selfishness and generosity, cruelty and benevolence, craft and simplicity, abject villany and romantic heroism. One sentence is such as a veteran diplomatist would scarcely write in cipher for the direction of his most confidential spy; the next seems to be extracted from a theme composed by an ardent schoolboy on the death of Leonidas. An act of dexterous perfidy, and an act of patriotic self-devotion, call forth the same kind and the same degree of respectful admiration. The moral sensibility of the writer seems at once to be morbidly obtuse and morbidly acute. Two characters altogether dissimilar are united in him. They are not merely joined, but interwoven. They are the warp and the woof of his mind; and their combination, like that of the variegated threads in shot silk, gives to the whole texture a glancing and ever-changing appearance. The explanation might have been easy, if he had been a very weak or a very affected man. But he was evidently neither the one nor the other. His works prove, beyond all contradiction, that his understanding was strong, his taste pure, and his sense of the ridiculous exquisitely keen.

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[1] Cardinal Pole, in his *Apology* addressed to the Emperor Charles V., says that some of Machiavelli's friends professed to have heard from Machiavelli himself that this was the real object of *The Prince.*

[2] "Est itaque quod gratias agamus Macciavellio et hujusmodi scriptoribus qui aperte et indissimulanter proferunt quid homines facere soleant, non quid debeant. Fieri enim nullo modo potest, ut conjungatur *serpentina* illa *prudentia* cum *innocentia columbina* nisi quis mali ipsius naturam penitus pernoscat" (Bacon, *De Augmentis Scientiarum*, book vii., ch. ii.).

This was also the opinion of Gentili in his treatise *De Legationibus*, and of Rousseau in his *Contrat Social.*

[3] Clement VII. (Giulio de Medici), 1478-1534, was elected Pope in 1523. He is best known to English readers by his negotiation with Henry VIII. on the divorce of Catharine of Arragon. His virtues are overrated by Macaulay. Although amiable, he lacked alike strength and elevation of character.

This is strange: and yet the strangest is behind. There is no reason whatever to think, that those amongst whom he lived saw any thing shocking or incongruous in his writings. Abundant proofs remain of the high estimation in which both his works and his person were held by the most respectable among his contemporaries. Clement the Seventh patronised the publication of those very books which the Council of Trent, in the following generation, pronounced unfit for the perusal of Christians. Some members of the democratical party censured the Secretary for dedicating The Prince to a patron who bore the unpopular name of Medici.[1] But to those immoral doctrines which have since called forth such severe reprehensions no exception appears to have been taken. The cry against them was first raised beyond the Alps, and seems to have been heard with amazement in Italy. The earliest assailant, as far as we are aware, was a countryman of our own, Cardinal Pole.[1] The author of the Anti-Machiavelli was a French Protestant.

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[1] Lorenzo de Medici, 1492-1519, who must not be confounded with his more famous grandfather. Along with his uncle, Giuliano, he represented the House of Medici in Florence after the election of an elder uncle, Giovanni, to the Papacy as Leo X. in 1513. Leo gave Lorenzo the Duchy of Urbino, but Lorenzo is best remembered as the father of Catharine, Queen of France.

It is, therefore, in the state of moral feeling among the Italians of those times that we must seek for the real explanation of what seems most mysterious in the life and writings of this remarkable man. As this is a subject which suggests many interesting considerations, both political and metaphysical, we shall make no apology for discussing it at some length.

During the gloomy and disastrous centuries which followed the downfall of the Roman Empire, Italy had preserved, in a far greater degree than any other part of Western Europe, the traces of ancient civilisation. The night which descended upon her was the night of an Arctic summer. The dawn began to reappear before the last reflection of the preceding sunset had faded from the horizon. It was in the time of the French Merovingians and of the Saxon Heptarchy that ignorance and ferocity seemed to have done their worst.[2] Yet even then the Neapolitan provinces, recognising the authority of the Eastern Empire, preserved something of Eastern knowledge and refinement. Rome, protected by the sacred character of her Pontiffs, enjoyed at least comparative security and repose. Even in those regions where the sanguinary Lombards had fixed their monarchy, there was incomparably more of wealth, of information, of physical comfort, and of social order, than could be found in Gaul, Britain, or Germany.

That which most distinguished Italy from the neighbouring countries was the importance which the population of the towns, at a very early period, began to acquire. Some cities had been founded in wild and remote situations, by fugitives who had escaped from the rage of the barbarians. Such were Venice and Genoa,[3] which preserved their freedom by their obscurity, till they became able to preserve it by their power. Other cities seem to have retained, under all the changing dynasties of invaders, under Odoacer and Theodoric, Narses and Alboin,[1] the municipal institutions which had been conferred on them by the liberal policy of the Great Republic.[2] In provinces which the central government was too feeble either to protect or to oppress, these institutions gradually acquired stability and vigour. The citizens, defended by their walls, and governed by their own magistrates and their own by-laws, enjoyed a considerable share of republican independence. Thus a strong democratic spirit was called into action. The Carlovingian sovereigns were too imbecile to subdue it.[3] The generous policy of Otho encouraged it.[4] It might perhaps have been suppressed by a close coalition between the Church and the Empire. It was fostered and invigorated by their disputes. In the twelfth century it attained its full vigour, and, after a long and doubtful conflict, triumphed over the abilities and courage of the Swabian Princes.[5]

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[1] In his *Apology* above referred to Pole observes that he had scarcely begun to read the book before he perceived that it was written by the finger of Satan. Innocent Gentillet published in 1576 a book against Machiavelli in which he imputed to his teaching the massacre of St. Bartholomew. The German translation of this book was entitled *Anti-Machiavellus.*

[2] The Merovingians or Merovings were the first dynasty of Frankish kings which reigned in Gaul after the downfall of the Roman power. They derived their name from Merovech or Meroveus, a prince of the Salian Franks, but the real founder of the dynasty was his grandson, Chlodovech or Clovis, who reigned from A.D. 481 to 511, and subdued by far the greater part of Roman Gaul.

[3] Genoa had existed in classic times.

The assistance of the Ecclesiastical power had greatly contributed to the success of the Guelfs.[6] That success would, however, have been a doubtful good, if its only effect had been to substitute a moral for a political servitude, and to exalt the Popes at the expense of the Cæsars. Happily the public mind of Italy had long contained the seeds of free opinions, which were now rapidly developed by the genial influence of free institutions. The people of that country had observed the whole machinery of the church, its saints and its miracles, its lofty pretensions and its splendid ceremonial, its worthless blessings and its harmless curses, too long and too closely to be duped. They stood behind the scenes on which others were gazing with childish awe and interest. They witnessed the arrangement of the pullies, and the manufacture of the thunders. They saw the natural faces and heard the natural voices of the actors. Distant nations looked on the Pope as the vicegerent of the Almighty, the oracle of the All-wise, the umpire from whose decisions, in the disputes either of theologians or of kings, no Christian ought to appeal. The Italians were acquainted with all the follies of his youth, and with all the dishonest arts by which he had attained power. They knew how often he had employed the keys of the Church to release himself from the most sacred engagements, and its wealth to pamper his mistresses and nephews. The doctrines and rites of the established religion they treated with decent reverence. But though they still called themselves Catholics, they had ceased to be Papists. Those spiritual arms which carried terror into the palaces and camps of the proudest sovereigns excited only contempt in the immediate neighbourhood of the Vatican. Alexander,[1] when he commanded our Henry the Second to submit to the lash before the tomb of a rebellious subject, was himself an exile.[2] The Romans, apprehending that he entertained designs against their liberties, had driven him from their city; and, though he solemnly promised to confine himself for the future to his spiritual functions, they still refused to readmit him.

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[1] Odoacer or Odovacar, chief of the Herulians, deposed Romulus Augustulus, the last Emperor of the West, and, having received the title of patrician from the Eastern Emperor Zeno, became the ruler of Italy in 476. He was slain in 493 by Theodoric, King of the Ostrogoths or East Goths, who also obtained recognition from Constantinople and reigned over Italy from 493 to 526. Narses, the general of the Emperor Justinian, finally overthrew the Ostrogoths in 553 and governed the whole of Italy as viceroy until his death in 568. Immediately after that event Alboin, King of the Lombards, a new race of Teutonic invaders, overran Northern Italy, which was thus finally detached from the Empire.

[2] This is very doubtful. Carl Hegel in his *Geschichte der Städteverfassung von Italien*, the principal authority on the subject, denies that the mediæval municipal institutions of Italy can in any case be traced back to the Roman period.

[3] The kingdom of the Lombards, which comprised the greater part of Italy, was conquered by Charles the Great in A.D. 774. His descendants continued to reign in Italy until A.D. 887. The democratic spirit to which Macaulay refers was at that time kept down by the power which the bishops wielded in the cities and by the rise of feudalism.

[4] Otho I. (the Great), King of Germany, A.D. 936-973, conquered Italy and assumed the imperial title in 962. But he can hardly be said to have encouraged the liberty of the cities.

[5] The dynasty of the Hohenstaufen which held the imperial dignity (with interruptions) from 1137 to 1254. The two best-known emperors of this house, Frederic I., surnamed Barbarossa, and Frederic II., made strenuous but unsuccessful efforts to subjugate the cities of Northern Italy.

[6] The House of Guelf ruled at first in Bavaria, then in Saxony and afterwards in Brunswick. Several of its members were set up with the support of the Popes as rivals to the Emperors of the line of Hohenstaufen. The name of Guelf was extended to their adherents in Germany and Italy and at last came to signify simply a partisan

In every other part of Europe, a large and powerful privileged

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of the Popes against the Emperors. The party of the Emperors were known as Ghibellines from Waiblingen in Suabia, part of the domains of the Hohenstaufen. The factions and their names long survived in Italy the contest out of which they had arisen.

[1] Alexander III., Rolando Ranucci, who was elected Pope in 1159 and died in 1181.

[2] Henry thought it expedient to undergo the penance alluded to, but it was not enjoined by the Pope. Indeed the legates had already given absolution to Henry upon his declaration that he was innocent of the design against Becket's life. The whole of this passage is too strongly expressed. At the time in question vigorous political resistance to the Pope was not held inconsistent with Catholic orthodoxy as the history of England in the thirteenth century shows.

class trampled on the people and defied the government. But, in the most flourishing parts of Italy, the feudal nobles were reduced to comparative insignificance. In some districts they took shelter under the protection of the powerful commonwealths which they were unable to oppose, and gradually sank into the mass of burghers. In other places they possessed great influence; but it was an influence widely different from that which was exercised by the aristocracy of any Transalpine kingdom. They were not petty princes, but eminent citizens. Instead of strengthening their fastnesses among the mountains, they embellished their palaces in the market-place. The state of society in the Neapolitan dominions, and in some parts of the Ecclesiastical State, more nearly resembled that which existed in the great monarchies of Europe. But the governments of Lombardy and Tuscany, through all their revolutions, preserved a different character. A people, when assembled in a town, is far more formidable to its rulers than when dispersed over a wide extent of country. The most arbitrary of the Cæsars found it necessary to feed and divert the inhabitants of their unwieldy capital at the expense of the provinces. The citizens of Madrid have more than once besieged their sovereign in his own palace, and extorted from him the most humiliating concessions. The Sultans have often been compelled to propitiate the furious rabble of Constantinople with the head of an unpopular Vizier. From the same cause there was a certain tinge of democracy in the monarchies and aristocracies of Northern Italy.

Thus liberty, partially indeed and transiently, revisited Italy; and with liberty came commerce and empire, science and taste, all the comforts and all the ornaments of life. The Crusades, from which the inhabitants of other countries gained nothing but relics and wounds, brought to the rising commonwealths of the Adriatic and Tyrrhene seas a large increase of wealth, dominion, and knowledge. The moral and geographical position of those commonwealths enabled them to profit alike by the barbarism of the West and by the civilisation of the East. Italian ships covered every sea. Italian factories rose on every shore. The tables of Italian moneychangers were set in every city. Manufactures flourished. Banks were established. The operations of the commercial machine were facilitated by many useful and beautiful inventions. We doubt whether any country of Europe, our own excepted, have at the present time reached so high a point of wealth and civilisation as some parts of Italy had attained four hundred years ago. Historians rarely descend to those details from which alone the real state of a community can be collected. Hence posterity is too often deceived by the vague hyperboles of poets and rhetoricians, who mistake the splendour of a court for the happiness of a people. Fortunately, John Villani[1] has given us an ample and precise account of the state of Florence in the early part of the fourteenth century. The revenue of the Republic amounted to three hundred thousand florins; a sum which, allowing for the depreciation of the precious metals, was at least equivalent to six hundred thousand pounds sterling; a larger sum than England and Ireland, two centuries ago, yielded annually to Elizabeth. The manufacture of wool alone employed two hundred factories and thirty thousand workmen. The cloth annually produced sold, at an average, for twelve hundred thousand florins; a sum fully equal in exchangeable value to two millions and a half of our money. Four hundred thousand florins were annually coined. Eighty banks conducted the commercial operations, not of Florence only but of all Europe. The transactions of these establishments were sometimes of a magnitude which may surprise even the contemporaries of the Barings and the Rothschilds. Two houses[2] advanced to Edward the Third of England upwards of three hundred thousand marks, at a time when the mark contained more silver than fifty shillings of the present day, and when the value of silver was more than quadruple of what it now is. The city and its environs contained a hundred and seventy thousand inhabitants. In the various schools about ten thousand children were taught to read; twelve hundred studied arithmetic; six hundred received a learned education.

The progress of elegant literature and of the fine arts was proportioned to that of the public prosperity. Under the despotic successors of Augustus, all the fields of the intellect had been turned into arid wastes, still marked out by formal boundaries, still retaining the traces of old cultivation, but yielding neither flowers nor fruit. The deluge of barbarism came. It swept away all the landmarks. It obliterated all the signs of former tillage. But it fertilised while it devastated. When it receded, the wilderness was as the garden of God, rejoicing on every side, laughing, clapping its hands, pouring forth, in spontaneous abundance, every thing brilliant, or fragrant, or nourishing. A new language, characterised by simple sweetness and simple energy, had attained perfection. No tongue ever furnished more gorgeous and vivid tints to poetry; nor was it long before a poet appeared who knew how to employ them. Early in the fourteenth century came forth the Divine Comedy, beyond comparison the greatest work of imagination which had appeared since the poems of Homer. The following generation produced indeed no second Dante: but it was eminently distinguished by general intellectual activity. The study of the Latin writers had never been wholly neglected in Italy. But Petrarch introduced a more profound, liberal, and elegant scholarship, and communicated to his countrymen that enthusiasm for the literature, the history, and the antiquities of Rome, which divided his own heart with a frigid mistress and a more frigid Muse. Boccaccio turned their attention to the more sublime and graceful models of Greece.[1]

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[1] Giovanni Villani, 1275-1348, a Florentine, distinguished in commerce, in politics and in literature, whose *Chronicle* is one of the main authorities for Florentine history.

[2] The house of the Bardi and that of the Peruzzi.

From this time, the admiration of learning and genius became almost an idolatry among the people of Italy. Kings and republics, cardinals and doges, vied with each other in honouring and flattering Petrarch. Embassies from rival states solicited the honour of his instructions. His coronation agitated the Court of Naples and the people of Rome as much as the most important political transaction could have done.[2] To collect books and antiques, to found professorships, to patronise men of learning, became almost universal fashions among the great. The spirit of literary research allied itself to that of commercial enterprise. Every place to which the merchant princes of Florence extended their gigantic traffic, from the bazars of the Tigris to the monasteries of the Clyde, was ransacked for medals and manuscripts. Architecture, painting, and sculpture, were munificently encouraged. Indeed it would be difficult to name an Italian of eminence, during the period of which we speak, who, whatever may have been his general character, did not at least affect a love of letters and of the arts.

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[1] Petrarch had tried to master the Greek language, but was baffled by circumstances. Giovanni Boccaccio, 1313-1375, learnt Greek under a learned Calabrian named Leontius Pilatus, and is said to have procured his appointment by the Republic of Florence as public lecturer in Greek. Leontius did not hold this post long, nor is anything known of his pupils. The true revival of Greek studies began with the fifteenth century, when fear of destruction by the Ottomans led the Eastern emperors to seek alliances in the West and to hold out hopes of their conforming to the Roman Church. In the course of these negotiations many learned Greeks visited Italy and some settled there.

[2] In April of 1341 Petrarch was solemnly crowned poet-laureate on the Capitol by the Roman Senator in the sight of the assembled people. Robert, King of Naples, had moved Petrarch to seek this honour and sent him to Rome with the most flattering recommendations.

Knowledge and public prosperity continued to advance together. Both attained their meridian in the age of Lorenzo the Magnificent.[1] We cannot refrain from quoting the splendid passage, in which the Tuscan Thucydides describes the state of Italy at that period. "Ridotta tutta in somma pace e tranquillità, coltivata non meno ne' luoghi più montuosi e più sterili che nelle pianure e regioni più fertili, nè sottoposta ad altro imperio che de' suoi medesimi, non solo era abbondantissima d' abitatori e di ricchezze; ma illustrata sommamente dalla magnificenza di molti principi, dallo splendore di molte nobilissime e bellissime città, dalla sedia e maestà della religione, fioriva d' uomini prestantissimi nell' amministrazione della cose pubbliche, e d' ingegni molto nobili in tutte le scienze, ed in qualunque arte preclara ed industriosa."[2] When we peruse this just and splendid description, we can scarcely persuade ourselves that we are reading of times in which the annals of England and France present us only with a frightful spectacle of poverty, barbarity, and ignorance.[3] From the oppressions of illiterate masters, and the sufferings of a degraded peasantry, it is delightful to turn to the opulent and enlightened States of Italy, to the vast and magnificent cities, the ports, the arsenals, the villas, the museums, the libraries, the marts filled with every article of comfort or luxury, the factories swarming with artisans, the Apennines covered with rich cultivation up to their very summits, the Po wafting the harvests of Lombardy to the granaries of Venice, and carrying back the silks of Bengal and the furs of Siberia to the palaces of Milan. With peculiar pleasure, every cultivated mind must repose on the fair, the happy, the glorious Florence, the halls which rang with the mirth of Pulci,[1] the cell where twinkled the midnight lamp of Politian,[2] the statues on which the young eye of Michael Angelo glared with the frenzy of a kindred inspiration, the gardens in which Lorenzo meditated some sparkling song for the May-day dance of the Etrurian virgins.[3] Alas for the beautiful city! Alas, for the wit and the learning, the genius and the love!

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[1] The period of greatest prosperity in Italy must be placed earlier than the time of Lorenzo, when the progress of Ottoman conquest had crippled Italian commerce in the Levant and the Italian cities had been weakened by costly wars, the decline of free institutions and the growth of luxury.

[2] "Enjoying the utmost peace and tranquillity, cultivated as well in the most mountainous and barren places as in the plains and most fertile regions, and not subject to any other dominion than that of its own people, it not only overflowed with inhabitants and with riches, but was highly adorned by the magnificence of many princes, by the splendour of many renowned and beautiful cities, by the abode and majesty of religion, and abounded in men who excelled in the administration of public affairs and in minds most eminent in all the sciences and in every noble and useful art" (Guicciardini, *History of Italy*, book i.).

[3] This is an exaggerated and incorrect description of England and France in the fifteenth century. Macaulay himself quotes in the essay on Hampden the testimony of Comines, a competent judge, who knew all three countries and asserted that the common people were better treated in England than anywhere else. Thorold Rogers, exaggerating as much as Macaulay, called the fifteenth century "the golden age of the English labourer." Villenage was rapidly disappearing, the yeomen were numerous, and the prosperity of many of the towns is still attested by the number of large and beautiful parish churches built at that period. In France the lower orders had much more to suffer, but the burgher class was often wealthy and luxurious in its habits. France and England had an art of their own and could boast of works of architecture perhaps equal to anything produced in Italy during the middle ages. In France and England alike the fifteenth century was a period of intellectual decline. Yet England had not long lost Chaucer and Wycliffe, whilst France possessed an immense poetic literature. In military and political vigour both the French and the English were at this time superior to the Italians. Italian civilisation was unquestionably riper, but the English and French were far from barbarous.

> "Le donne, e i cavalier, gli affanni, e gli agi,
> Che ne 'nvogliava amore e cortesia
> Lâ dove i cuor son fatti sì malvagi."[4]

A time was at hand, when all the seven vials of the Apocalypse were to be poured forth and shaken out over those pleasant countries, a time of slaughter, famine, beggary, infamy, slavery, despair.

In the Italian States, as in many natural bodies, untimely decrepitude was the penalty of precocious maturity. Their early greatness, and their early decline, are principally to be attributed to the same cause, the preponderance which the towns acquired in the political system.

In a community of hunters or of shepherds, every man easily and necessarily becomes a soldier. His ordinary avocations are perfectly compatible with all the duties of military service. However remote may be the expedition on which he is bound, he finds it easy to transport with him the stock from which he derives his subsistence. The whole people is an army; the whole year a march. Such was the state of society which facilitated the gigantic conquests of Attila and Tamerlane.

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[1] Ludovico Pulci, 1431-1487 (?), a friend of Lorenzo de Medici, a wit and a poet, best remembered for his *Morgante Maggiore*, a burlesque epic.

[2] Angelo Ambrogini, 1454-1494, known from his birth-place as Poliziano, another friend of Lorenzo and tutor to his children, was one of the most illustrious of the humanists, an accomplished classical scholar and a poet of high merit both in Latin and in Italian.

[3] Lorenzo himself wrote poems, especially carnival songs, more remarkable for elegance than for morality.

[4] "The ladies and the knights, the toils and sports to which love and courtesy stirred our desire there where all hearts have grown so evil" (Dante, *Purgatorio*, canto 14, lines 109-111).

But a people which subsists by the cultivation of the earth is in a very different situation. The husbandman is bound to the soil on which he labours. A long campaign would be ruinous to him. Still his pursuits are such as give to his frame both the active and the passive strength necessary to a soldier. Nor do they, at least in the infancy of agricultural science, demand his uninterrupted attention. At particular times of the year he is almost wholly unemployed, and can, without injury to himself, afford the time necessary for a short expedition. Thus the legions of Rome were supplied during its earlier wars. The season during which the fields did not require the presence of the cultivators sufficed for a short inroad and a battle. These operations, too frequently interrupted to produce decisive results, yet served to keep up among the people a degree of discipline and courage which rendered them, not only secure, but formidable. The archers and billmen of the middle ages, who, with provisions for forty days at their backs, left the fields for the camp, were troops of the same description.

But when commerce and manufactures begin to flourish a great change takes place. The sedentary habits of the desk and the loom render the exertions and hardships of war insupportable. The business of traders and artisans requires their constant presence and attention. In such a community there is little superfluous time; but there is generally much superfluous money. Some members of the society are, therefore, hired to relieve the rest from a task inconsistent with their habits and engagements.

The history of Greece is, in this, as in many other respects, the best commentary on the history of Italy. Five hundred years before the Christian era, the citizens of the republics round the Ægean Sea formed perhaps the finest militia that ever existed. As wealth and refinement advanced, the system underwent a gradual alteration. The Ionian States were the first in which commerce and the arts were cultivated, and the first in which the ancient discipline decayed. Within eighty years after the battle of Platæa,[1] mercenary troops were every where plying for battles and sieges. In the time of Demosthenes,[2] it was scarcely possible to persuade or compel the Athenians to enlist for foreign service. The laws of Lycurgus prohibited trade and manufactures. The Spartans, therefore, continued to form a national force long after their neighbours had begun to hire soldiers. But their military spirit declined with their singular institutions. In the second century before Christ, Greece contained only one nation of warriors, the savage highlanders of Ætolia, who were some generations behind their countrymen in civilisation and intelligence.

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[1] Fought in the year 479 B.C.

[2] Born probably in 382, died in 322 B.C.

All the causes which produced these effects among the Greeks acted still more strongly on the modern Italians. Instead of a power like Sparta, in its nature warlike, they had amongst them an ecclesiastical state, in its nature pacific. Where there are numerous slaves, every freeman is induced by the strongest motives to familiarise himself with the use of arms. The commonwealths of Italy did not, like those of Greece, swarm with thousands of these household enemies. Lastly, the mode in which military operations were conducted during the prosperous times of Italy was peculiarly unfavourable to the formation of an efficient militia. Men covered with iron from head to foot, armed with ponderous lances, and mounted on horses of the largest breed, were considered as composing the strength of an army. The infantry was regarded as comparatively worthless, and was neglected till it became really so. These tactics maintained their ground for centuries in most parts of Europe. That foot-soldiers could withstand the charge of heavy cavalry was thought utterly impossible, till, towards the close of the fifteenth century, the rude mountaineers of Switzerland dissolved the spell, and astounded the most experienced generals by receiving the dreaded shock on an impenetrable forest of pikes.[1]

The use of the Grecian spear, the Roman sword, or the modern bayonet, might be acquired with comparative ease. But nothing short of the daily exercise of years could train the man at arms to support his ponderous panoply, and manage his unwieldy weapon. Throughout Europe this most important branch of war became a separate profession. Beyond the Alps, indeed, though a profession, it was not generally a trade. It was the duty and the amusement of a large class of country gentlemen. It was the service by which they held their lands, and the diversion by which, in the absence of mental resources, they beguiled their leisure. But in the Northern States of Italy, as we have already remarked, the growing power of the cities, where it had not exterminated this order of men, had completely changed their habits. Here, therefore, the practice of employing mercenaries became universal, at a time when it was almost unknown in other countries.

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[1] Macaulay places the discovery too late. At Courtrai, at Crecy and at Poitiers infantry had defeated heavy cavalry. Even in Italy the Lombard militia, mostly foot-soldiers, had defeated the imperial chivalry at the battle of Legnano in 1176. The Swiss infantry first achieved fame by their victories at Granson and Morat over Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, in 1476.

When war becomes the trade of a separate class, the least dangerous course left to a government is to form that class into a standing army. It is scarcely possible, that men can pass their lives in the service of one state, without feeling some interest in its greatness. Its victories are their victories. Its defeats are their defeats. The contract loses something of its mercantile character. The services of the soldier are considered as the effects of patriotic zeal, his pay as the tribute of national gratitude. To betray the power which employs him, to be even remiss in its service, are in his eyes the most atrocious and degrading of crimes.

When the princes and commonwealths of Italy began to use hired troops, their wisest course would have been to form separate military establishments. Unhappily this was not done. The mercenary warriors of the Peninsula, instead of being attached to the service of different powers, were regarded as the common property of all. The connection between the state and its defenders was reduced to the most simple and naked traffic. The adventurer brought his horse, his weapons, his strength, and his experience, into the market. Whether the King of Naples or the Duke of Milan, the Pope or the Signory of Florence, struck the bargain, was to him a matter of perfect indifference. He was for the highest wages and the longest term. When the campaign for which he had contracted was finished, there was neither law nor punctilio to prevent him from instantly turning his arms against his late masters. The soldier was altogether disjoined from the citizen and from the subject.

The natural consequences followed. Left to the conduct of men who neither loved those whom they defended, nor hated those whom they opposed, who were often bound by stronger ties to the army against which they fought than to the state which they served, who lost by the termination of the conflict, and gained by its prolongation, war completely changed its character. Every man came into the field of battle impressed with the knowledge that, in a few days, he might be taking the pay of the power against which he was then employed, and fighting by the side of his enemies against his associates. The strongest interests and the strongest feelings concurred to mitigate the hostility of those who had lately been brethren in arms, and who might soon be brethren in arms once more. Their common profession was a bond of union not to be forgotten even when they were engaged in the service of contending parties. Hence it was that operations, languid and indecisive beyond any recorded in history, marches and counter-marches, pillaging expeditions and blockades, bloodless capitulations and equally bloodless combats, make up the military history of Italy during the course of nearly two centuries. Mighty armies fight from sunrise to sunset. A great victory is won. Thousands of prisoners are taken; and hardly a life is lost. A pitched battle seems to have been really less dangerous than an ordinary civil tumult.[1]

Courage was now no longer necessary even to the military character. Men grew old in camps, and acquired the highest renown by their warlike achievements, without being once required to face serious danger. The political consequences are too well known. The richest and most enlightened part of the world was left undefended to the assaults of every barbarous invader, to the brutality of Switzerland, the insolence of France, and the fierce rapacity of Arragon. The moral effects which followed from this state of things were still more remarkable.

Among the rude nations which lay beyond the Alps, valour was absolutely indispensable. Without it none could be eminent; few could be secure. Cowardice was, therefore, naturally considered as the foulest reproach. Among the polished Italians, enriched by commerce, governed by law, and passionately attached to literature, every thing was done by superiority of intelligence. Their very wars, more pacific than the peace of their neighbours, required rather civil than military qualifications. Hence, while courage was the point of honour in other countries, ingenuity became the point of honour in Italy.

From these principles were deduced, by processes strictly analogous, two opposite systems of fashionable morality. Through the greater part of Europe, the vices which peculiarly belong to timid dispositions, and which are the natural defence of weakness, fraud, and hypocrisy, have always been most disreputable. On the other hand, the excesses of haughty and daring spirits have been treated with indulgence, and even with respect. The Italians regarded with corresponding lenity those crimes which require self-command and address, quick observation, fertile invention, and profound knowledge of human nature.

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[1] In the battle of Anghiari (A.D. 1440), fiercely contested for several hours between the Florentine and Milanese armies, only one of the combatants was killed, and he only by a kicking horse after he had been dismounted.

Such a prince as our Henry the Fifth would have been the idol of the North. The follies of his youth, the selfish ambition of his manhood, the Lollards roasted at slow fires,[1] the prisoners massacred on the field of battle, the expiring lease of priestcraft renewed for another century, the dreadful legacy of a causeless and hopeless war bequeathed to a people who had no interest in its event, every thing is forgotten but the victory of Agincourt. Francis Sforza,[2] on the other hand, was the model of Italian heroes. He made his employers and his rivals alike his tools. He first overpowered his open enemies by the help of faithless allies; he then armed himself against his allies with the spoils taken from his enemies. By his incomparable dexterity, he raised himself from the precarious and dependent situation of a military adventurer to the first throne of Italy. To such a man much was forgiven, hollow friendship, ungenerous enmity, violated faith. Such are the opposite errors which men commit, when their morality is not a science but a taste, when they abandon eternal principles for accidental associations.

We have illustrated our meaning by an instance taken from history. We will select another from fiction. Othello murders his wife; he gives orders for the murder of his lieutenant; he ends by murdering himself. Yet he never loses the esteem and affection of Northern readers. His intrepid and ardent spirit redeems every thing. The unsuspecting confidence with which he listens to his adviser, the agony with which he shrinks from the thought of shame, the tempest of passion with which he commits his crimes, and the haughty fearlessness with which he avows them, give an extraordinary interest to his character. Iago, on the contrary, is the object of universal loathing. Many are inclined to suspect that Shakspeare has been seduced into an exaggeration unusual with him, and has drawn a monster who has no archetype in human nature. Now we suspect that an Italian audience in the fifteenth century would have felt very differently. Othello would have inspired nothing but detestation and contempt. The folly with which he trusts the friendly professions of a man whose promotion he had obstructed, the credulity with which he takes unsupported assertions, and trivial circumstances, for unanswerable proofs, the violence with which he silences the exculpation till the exculpation can only aggravate his misery, would have excited the abhorrence and disgust of the spectators. The conduct of Iago they would assuredly have condemned; but they would have condemned it as we condemn that of his victim. Something of interest and respect would have mingled with their disapprobation. The readiness of the traitor's wit, the clearness of his judgment, the skill with which he penetrates the dispositions of others and conceals his own, would have insured to him a certain portion of their esteem.

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[1] The evil done by Henry V. can hardly be exaggerated, but the roasting of the Lollards at slow fires appears to be a confused reminiscence of his having at the execution of John Badby caused the fire to be put out in order to give the victim another chance of recanting. The motive in this action was rather humanity than cruelty.

[2] Francesco Alessandro Sforza, 1401-1466, son of an eminent soldier of fortune, embraced the same profession and rose to greatness in the service of Philippo Maria Visconti, Duke of Milan. He formed a principality for himself in the March of Ancona, and was promised the hand of the duke's daughter, Bianca. Not receiving her, he deserted the duke and took service with his enemies, the Venetians and Florentines. At length Philippo Maria gave him Bianca, but remaining his enemy at heart, joined with the Pope and the King of Naples to destroy him. In spite of Florentine and Venetian succour Sforza was reduced to extremities. In 1447 the duke died, many of the towns in the duchy revolted and Milan constituted itself a republic. As the Venetians now threatened to conquer Lombardy, the Milanese retained Sforza to command their forces. But after defeating the Venetians Sforza made a treaty with them to divide the territory of his employers, and with their help attacked Milan. The Venetians, fearing his success, presently made peace with Milan, but Sforza persevered, reduced the city by famine and caused himself to be proclaimed duke. He afterwards waged war on the Venetians. His rule was able and magnificent.

So wide was the difference between the Italians and their neighbours. A similar difference existed between the Greeks of the second century before Christ, and their masters the Romans. The conquerors, brave and resolute, faithful to their engagements, and strongly influenced by religious feelings, were, at the same time, ignorant, arbitrary, and cruel. With the vanquished people were deposited all the art, the science, and the literature of the Western world. In poetry, in philosophy, in painting, in architecture, in sculpture, they had no rivals. Their manners were polished, their perceptions acute, their invention ready; they were tolerant, affable, humane; but of courage and sincerity they were almost utterly destitute. Every rude centurion consoled himself for his intellectual inferiority, by remarking that knowledge and taste seemed only to make men atheists, cowards, and slaves. The distinction long continued to be strongly marked, and furnished an admirable subject for the fierce sarcasms of Juvenal.[1]

The citizen of an Italian commonwealth was the Greek of the time of Juvenal and the Greek of the time of Pericles, joined in one. Like the former, he was timid and pliable, artful and mean. But, like the latter, he had a country. Its independence and prosperity were dear to him. If his character were degraded by some base crimes, it was, on the other hand, ennobled by public spirit and by an honourable ambition.

A vice sanctioned by the general opinion is merely a vice. The evil terminates in itself. A vice condemned by the general opinion produces a pernicious effect on the whole character. The former is a local malady, the latter a constitutional taint. When the reputation of the offender is lost, he too often flings the remains of his virtue after it in despair. The Highland gentleman who, a century ago, lived by taking black mail from his neighbours, committed the same crime for which Wild[2] was accompanied to Tyburn by the huzzas of two hundred thousand people. But there can be no doubt that he was a much less depraved man than Wild. The deed for which Mrs. Brownrigg[3] was hanged sinks into nothing, when compared with the conduct of the Roman who treated the public to a hundred pair of gladiators. Yet we should greatly wrong such a Roman if we supposed that his disposition was as cruel as that of Mrs. Brownrigg. In our own country, a woman forfeits her place in society by what, in a man, is too commonly considered as an honourable distinction, and, at worst, as a venial error. The consequence is notorious. The moral principle of a woman is frequently more impaired by a single lapse from virtue than that of a man by twenty years of intrigues. Classical antiquity would furnish us with instances stronger, if possible, than those to which we have referred.

We must apply this principle to the case before us. Habits of dissimulation and falsehood, no doubt, mark a man of our age and country as utterly worthless and abandoned. But it by no means follows that a similar judgment would be just in the case of an Italian of the middle ages. On the contrary, we frequently find those faults which we are accustomed to consider as certain indications of a mind altogether depraved, in company with great and good qualities, with generosity, with benevolence, with disinterestedness. From such a state of society, Palamedes, in the admirable dialogue of Hume,[1] might have drawn illustrations of his theory as striking as any of those with which Fourli furnished him. These are not, we well know, the lessons which historians are generally most careful to teach, or readers most willing to learn. But they are not therefore useless. How Philip disposed his troops at Chæronea, where Hannibal crossed the Alps, whether Mary blew up Darnley, or Siquier shot Charles the Twelfth,[2] and ten thousand other questions of the same description, are in themselves unimportant. The inquiry may amuse us, but the decision leaves us no wiser. He alone reads history aright who, observing how powerfully circumstances influence the feelings and opinions of men, how often vices pass into virtues and paradoxes into axioms, learns to distinguish what is accidental and transitory in human nature from what is essential and immutable.

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[1] Juvenal, satire iii., lines 58-125.

[2] Jonathan Wild, 1682 (?) -1725, a famous thieftaker and receiver of stolen goods, who was finally condemned to death for having undertaken to return some stolen lace on payment of ten pounds. His career suggested Fielding's *Jonathan Wild the Great*. Highland gentlemen were sometimes paid by their Lowland neighbours to prevent the stealing of cattle or to ensure their recovery if stolen (see Scott's *Waverley*).

[3] Elizabeth Brownrigg was hanged in 1767 because

"She whipp'd two female 'prentices to death
And hid them in the coalhole."

(Canning and Frere in the *Anti-Jacobin*.)

In this respect no history suggests more important reflections than that of the Tuscan and Lombard commonwealths. The character of the Italian statesman seems, at first sight, a collection of contradictions, a phantom as monstrous as the portress of hell in Milton, half divinity, half snake, majestic and beautiful above, grovelling and poisonous below.[3] We see a man whose thoughts and words have no connection with each other, who never hesitates at an oath when he wishes to seduce, who never wants a pretext when he is inclined to betray. His cruelties spring, not from the heat of blood, or the insanity of uncontrolled power, but from deep and cool meditation. His passions, like well-trained troops, are impetuous by rule, and in their most headstrong fury never forget the discipline to which they have been accustomed. His whole soul is occupied with vast and complicated schemes of ambition: yet his aspect and language exhibit nothing but philosophical moderation. Hatred and revenge eat into his heart: yet every look is a cordial smile, every gesture a familiar caress. He never excites the suspicion of his adversaries by petty provocations. His purpose is disclosed only when it is accomplished. His face is unruffled, his speech is courteous, till vigilance is laid asleep, till a vital point is exposed, till a sure aim is taken; and then he strikes for the first and last time. Military courage, the boast of the sottish German, of the frivolous and prating Frenchman, of the romantic and arrogant Spaniard, he neither possesses nor values. He shuns danger, not because he is insensible to shame, but because, in the society in which he lives, timidity has ceased to be shameful. To do an injury openly is, in his estimation, as wicked as to do it secretly, and far less profitable. With him the most honourable means are those which are the surest, the speediest, and the darkest. He cannot comprehend how a man should scruple to deceive those whom he does not scruple to destroy. He would think it madness to declare open hostilities against rivals whom he might stab in a friendly embrace, or poison in a consecrated wafer.

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[1] Published in the appendix to Hume's *Inquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*.

[2] Charles XII. of Sweden, 1682-1718, was shot whilst besieging the fortress of Friedrichshall in Norway under circumstances which made it seem impossible that the ball should have come from the enemy. It was suspected that Siquier, a Frenchman who held the rank of lieutenant-general in the Swedish army, had been bribed by some disaffected nobles to murder the King.

[3] "The one seemed woman to the waist and fair,
But ended foul in many a scaly fold
Voluminous and vast—a serpent armed
With mortal sting."

—*Paradise Lost*, book iii., lines 650-653.

Yet this man, black with the vices which we consider as most loathsome, traitor, hypocrite, coward, assassin, was by no means destitute even of those virtues which we generally consider as indicating superior elevation of character. In civil courage, in perseverance, in presence of mind, those barbarous warriors, who were foremost in the battle or the breach, were far his inferiors. Even the dangers which he avoided with a caution almost pusillanimous never confused his perceptions, never paralysed his inventive faculties, never wrung out one secret from his smooth tongue, and his inscrutable brow. Though a dangerous enemy, and a still more dangerous accomplice, he could be a just and beneficent ruler. With so much unfairness in his policy, there was an extraordinary degree of fairness in his intellect. Indifferent to truth in the transactions of life, he was honestly devoted to truth in the researches of speculation. Wanton cruelty was not in his nature. On the contrary, where no political object was at stake, his disposition was soft and humane. The susceptibility of his nerves and the activity of his imagination inclined him to sympathise with the feelings of others, and to delight in the charities and courtesies of social life. Perpetually descending to actions which might seem to mark a mind diseased through all its faculties, he had nevertheless an exquisite sensibility, both for the natural and the moral sublime, for every graceful and every lofty conception. Habits of petty intrigue and dissimulation might have rendered him incapable of great general views, but that the expanding effect of his philosophical studies counteracted the narrowing tendency. He had the keenest enjoyment of wit, eloquence, and poetry. The fine arts profited alike by the severity of his judgment, and by the liberality of his patronage. The portraits of some of the remarkable Italians of those times are perfectly in harmony with this description. Ample and majestic foreheads, brows strong and dark, but not frowning, eyes of which the calm full gaze, while it expresses nothing, seems to discern every thing, cheeks pale with thought and sedentary habits, lips formed with feminine delicacy, but compressed with more than masculine decision, mark out men at once enterprising and timid, men equally skilled in detecting the purposes of others, and in concealing their own, men who must have been formidable enemies and unsafe allies, but men, at the same time, whose tempers were mild and equable, and who possessed an amplitude and subtlety of intellect which would have rendered them eminent either in active or in contemplative life, and fitted them either to govern or to instruct mankind.

Every age and every nation has certain characteristic vices, which prevail almost universally, which scarcely any person scruples to avow, and which even rigid moralists but faintly censure. Succeeding generations change the fashion of their morals, with the fashion of their hats and their coaches; take some other kind of wickedness under their patronage, and wonder at the depravity of their ancestors. Nor is this all. Posterity, that high court of appeal which is never tired of eulogising its own justice and discernment, acts on such occasions like a Roman dictator after a general mutiny. Finding the delinquents too numerous to be all punished, it selects some of them at hazard, to bear the whole penalty of an offence in which they are not more deeply implicated than those who escape. Whether decimation be a convenient mode of military execution, we know not; but we solemnly protest against the introduction of such a principle into the philosophy of history.

In the present instance, the lot has fallen on Machiavelli, a man whose public conduct was upright and honourable, whose views of morality, where they differed from those of the persons around him, seemed to have differed for the better, and whose only fault was, that, having adopted some of the maxims then generally received, he arranged them more luminously, and expressed them more forcibly, than any other writer.

Having now, we hope, in some degree cleared the personal character of Machiavelli, we come to the consideration of his works. As a poet he is not entitled to a high place;[1] but his comedies deserve attention.

The Mandragola, in particular, is superior to the best of Goldoni,[2] and inferior only to the best of Molière. It is the work of a man who, if he had devoted himself to the drama, would probably have attained the highest eminence, and produced a permanent and salutary effect on the national taste. This we infer, not so much from the degree, as from the kind, of its excellence. There are compositions which indicate still greater talent, and which are perused with still greater delight, from which we should have drawn very different conclusions. Books quite worthless are quite harmless. The sure sign of the general decline of an art is the frequent occurrence, not of deformity, but of misplaced beauty. In general, Tragedy is corrupted by eloquence, and Comedy by wit.

The real object of the drama is the exhibition of human character. This, we conceive, is no arbitrary canon, originating in local and temporary associations, like those canons which regulate the number of acts in a play, or of syllables in a line. To this fundamental law every other regulation is subordinate. The situations which most signally develop character form the best plot. The mother tongue of the passions is the best style.

This principle, rightly understood, does not debar the poet from any grace of composition. There is no style in which some man may not, under some circumstances, express himself. There is therefore no style which the drama rejects, none which it does not occasionally require. It is in the discernment of place, of time, and of person, that the inferior artists fail. The fantastic rhapsody of Mercutio, the elaborate declamation of Antony, are, where Shakspeare has placed them, natural and pleasing. But Dryden would have made Mercutio challenge Tybalt in hyperboles as fanciful as those in which he describes the chariot of Mab. Corneille would have represented Antony as scolding and coaxing Cleopatra with all the measured rhetoric of a funeral oration.

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[1] In the original essay Macaulay had placed here some remarks upon Machiavelli's poems which he omitted from the reprint.

[2] Carlo Goldoni, 1707-1793, the most distinguished writer of comedy in later Italian literature.

No writers have injured the Comedy of England so deeply as Congreve and Sheridan.[1] Both were men of splendid wit and polished taste. Unhappily, they made all their characters in their own likeness. Their works bear the same relation to the legitimate drama which a transparency bears to a painting. There are no delicate touches, no hues imperceptibly fading into each other: the whole is lighted up with an universal glare. Outlines and tints are forgotten in the common blaze which illuminates all. The flowers and fruits of the intellect abound; but it is the abundance of a jungle, not of a garden, unwholesome, bewildering, unprofitable from its very plenty, rank from its very fragrance. Every fop, every boor, every valet, is a man of wit. The very butts and dupes, Tattle, Witwould, Puff, Acres, outshine the whole Hotel of Rambouillet. To prove the whole system of this school erroneous, it is only necessary to apply the test which dissolved the enchanted Florimel,[2] to place the true by the false Thalia, to contrast the most celebrated characters which have been drawn by the writers of whom we speak with the Bastard in King John or the Nurse in Romeo and Juliet. It was not surely from want of wit that Shakspeare adopted so different a manner. Benedick and Beatrice throw Mirabel and Millamant[3] into the shade. All the good sayings of the facetious houses of Absolute and Surface might have been clipped from the single character of Falstaff, without being missed. It would have been easy for that fertile mind to have given Bardolph and Shallow as much wit as Prince Hal, and to have made Dogberry and Verges retort on each other in sparkling epigrams. But he knew that such indiscriminate prodigality was, to use his own admirable language, "from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was, and is, to hold, as it were, the mirror up to Nature."[4]

This digression will enable our readers to understand what we mean when we say that in the Mandragola, Machiavelli has proved that he completely understood the nature of the dramatic art, and possessed talents which would have enabled him to excel in it. By the correct and vigorous delineation of human nature, it produces interest without a pleasing or skilful plot, and laughter without the least ambition of wit. The lover, not a very delicate or generous lover, and his adviser the parasite, are drawn with spirit. The hypocritical confessor is an admirable portrait. He is, if we mistake not, the original of Father Dominic,[1] the best comic character of Dryden. But old Nicias is the glory of the piece. We cannot call to mind any thing that resembles him. The follies which Molière ridicules are those of affectation, not those of fatuity. Coxcombs and pedants, not absolute simpletons, are his game. Shakspeare has indeed a vast assortment of fools; but the precise species of which we speak is not, if we remember right, to be found there. Shallow is a fool. But his animal spirits supply, to a certain degree, the place of cleverness. His talk is to that of Sir John what soda water is to champagne. It has the effervescence though not the body or the flavour. Slender and Sir Andrew Aguecheek are fools, troubled with an uneasy consciousness of their folly, which, in the latter, produces meekness and docility, and in the former, awkwardness, obstinacy, and confusion. Cloten is an arrogant fool, Osric a foppish fool, Ajax a savage fool; but Nicias is, as Thersites says of Patroclus, a fool positive. His mind is occupied by no strong feeling; it takes every character, and retains none; its aspect is diversified, not by passions, but by faint and transitory semblances of passion, a mock joy, a mock fear, a mock love, a mock pride, which chase each other like shadows over its surface, and vanish as soon as they appear. He is just idiot enough to be an object, not of pity or horror, but of ridicule. He bears some resemblance to poor Calandrino, whose mishaps, as recounted by Boccaccio,[2] have made all Europe merry for more than four centuries. He perhaps resembles still more closely Simon da Villa, to whom Bruno and Buffalmacco promised the love of the Countess Civillari.[3] Nicias is, like Simon, of a learned profession; and the dignity with which he wears the doctoral fur, renders his absurdities infinitely more grotesque. The old Tuscan is the very language for such a being. Its peculiar simplicity gives even to the most forcible reasoning and the most brilliant wit an infantine air, generally delightful, but to a foreign reader sometimes a little ludicrous. Heroes and statesmen seem to lisp when they use it. It becomes Nicias incomparably, and renders all his silliness infinitely more silly.

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[1] See the essay on the comic dramatists of the Restoration.

[2] *Faerie Queene*, book v., canto 3.

[3] The hero and heroine of Congreve's "Way of the World."

[4] "Hamlet," act iii., scene 2.

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[1] The hero of Dryden's comedy, "The Spanish Friar," first acted in 1681.

[2] Boccaccio, *Decameron*, eighth day, third and sixth novels; and ninth day, third and fifth novels.

[3] *Ibid.*, eighth day, ninth novel.

We may add, that the verses with which the Mandragola is interspersed, appear to us to be the most spirited and correct of all that Machiavelli has written in metre. He seems to have entertained the same opinion; for he has introduced some of them in other places. The contemporaries of the author were not blind to the merits of this striking piece. It was acted at Florence with the greatest success. Leo the Tenth was among its admirers, and by his order it was represented at Rome.[1]

The Clizia is an imitation of the Casina of Plautus, which is itself an imitation of the lost *κληρουμένοι* of Diphilus.[2] Plautus was, unquestionably, one of the best Latin writers; but the Casina is by no means one of his best plays; nor is it one which offers great facilities to an imitator. The story is as alien from modern habits of life, as the manner in which it is developed from the modern fashion of composition. The lover remains in the country and the heroine in her chamber during the whole action, leaving their fate to be decided by a foolish father, a cunning mother, and two knavish servants. Machiavelli has executed his task with judgment and taste. He has accommodated the plot to a different state of society, and has very dexterously connected it with the history of his own times. The relation of the trick put on the doting old lover is exquisitely humorous. It is far superior to the corresponding passage in the Latin comedy, and scarcely yields to the account which Falstaff gives of his ducking.

Two other comedies without titles, the one in prose, the other in verse, appear among the works of Machiavelli. The former is very short, lively enough, but of no great value. The latter we can scarcely believe to be genuine. Neither its merits nor its defects remind us of the reputed author. It was first printed in 1796, from a manuscript discovered in the celebrated library of the Strozzi. Its genuineness, if we have been rightly informed, is established solely by the comparison of hands. Our suspicions are strengthened by the circumstance, that the same manuscript contained a description of the plague of 1527, which has also, in consequence, been added to the works of Machiavelli. Of this last composition the strongest external evidence would scarcely induce us to believe him guilty. Nothing was ever written more detestable in matter and manner. The narrations, the reflections, the jokes, the lamentations, are all the very worst of their respective kinds, at once trite and affected, threadbare tinsel from the Rag Fairs and Monmouth Streets[1] of literature. A foolish schoolboy might write such a piece, and, after he had written it, think it much finer than the incomparable introduction of the Decameron. But that a shrewd statesman, whose earliest works are characterised by manliness of thought and language, should, at near sixty years of age, descend to such puerility, is utterly inconceivable.[2]

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[1] AUTHOR'S FOOTNOTE.—Nothing can be more evident than that Paulus Jovius designates the Mandragola under the name of the Nicias. We should not have noticed what is so perfectly obvious, were it not that this natural and palpable misnomer has led the sagacious and industrious Bayle into a gross error.[1]

[2] T. Maccius Plautus, B.C. 254-184, whose comedies have so often been utilised by modern dramatists. Diphilus of Sinope was one of the most famous writers of what is known in Greek literature as the New Comedy, the comedy of manners which superseded the political comedy of Aristophanes. The title *κληρουμένοι* may be translated The Lot-casters.

[1] *Historical and Critical Dictionary*, art. "Machiavelli."

The little novel of Belphegor is pleasantly conceived, and pleasantly told. But the extravagance of the satire in some measure injures its effect. Machiavelli was unhappily married; and his wish to avenge his own cause and that of his brethren in misfortune, carried him beyond even the licence of fiction.[3] Jonson seems to have combined some hints taken from this tale, with others from Boccaccio, in the plot of "The Devil is an Ass," a play which, though not the most highly finished of his compositions, is perhaps that which exhibits the strongest proofs of genius.

The political correspondence of Machiavelli, first published in 1767, is unquestionably genuine, and highly valuable. The unhappy circumstances in which his country was placed during the greater part of his public life gave extraordinary encouragement to diplomatic talents. From the moment that Charles the Eighth[4] descended from the Alps, the whole character of Italian politics was changed. The governments of the Peninsula ceased to form an independent system. Drawn from their old orbit by the attraction of the larger bodies which now approached them, they became mere satellites of France and Spain. All their disputes, internal and external, were decided by foreign influence. The contests of opposite factions were carried on, not as formerly in the senate-house or in the market-place, but in the antechambers of Louis and Ferdinand. Under these circumstances, the prosperity of the Italian States depended far more on the ability of their foreign agents, than on the conduct of those who were intrusted with the domestic administration. The ambassador had to discharge functions far more delicate than transmitting orders of knighthood, introducing tourists, or presenting his brethren with the homage of his high consideration. He was an advocate to whose management the dearest interests of his clients were intrusted, a spy clothed with an inviolable character. Instead of consulting, by a reserved manner and ambiguous style, the dignity of those whom he represented, he was to plunge into all the intrigues of the court at which he resided, to discover and flatter every weakness of the prince, and of the favourite who governed the prince, and of the lacquey who governed the favourite. He was to compliment the mistress and bribe the confessor, to panegyrize or supplicate, to laugh or weep, to accommodate himself to every caprice, to lull every suspicion, to treasure every hint, to be every thing, to observe every thing, to endure every thing. High as the art of political intrigue had been carried in Italy, these were times which required it all.

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[1] Rag Fair or Rosemary Lane, a famous mart for old clothes, adjoins the Mint and is now known as Royal Mint Street. Monmouth Street, St. Giles, even more famous for this traffic, was swept away in forming Shaftesbury Avenue.

[2] Villari agrees with Macaulay in declaring this work spurious.

[3] Pluto, having observed that all who came down to hell ascribed their fate to the sinister influence of their wives, despatched the fiend Belphegor to earth to investigate the facts. His adventures supply the story. Macaulay is unjust to Machiavelli's wife, who seems to have been better than her husband deserved.

[4] Charles VIII. of France, who ascended the throne in 1483, led an army into Italy in 1494 to conquer the kingdom of Naples. Although he had no lasting success, he began the era of foreign aggression upon the Italian States.

On these arduous errands Machiavelli was frequently employed. He was sent to treat with the King of the Romans[1] and with the Duke of Valentinois.[2] He was twice ambassador at the Court of Rome, and thrice at that of France. In these missions, and in several others of inferior importance, he acquitted himself with great dexterity. His despatches form one of the most amusing and instructive collections extant. The narratives are clear and agreeably written; the remarks on men and things clever and judicious. The conversations are reported in a spirited and characteristic manner. We find ourselves introduced into the presence of the men who, during twenty eventful years, swayed the destinies of Europe. Their wit and their folly, their fretfulness and their merriment, are exposed to us. We are admitted to overhear their chat, and to watch their familiar gestures. It is interesting and curious to recognise, in circumstances which elude the notice of historians, the feeble violence and shallow cunning of Louis the Twelfth;[1] the bustling insignificance of Maximilian, cursed with an impotent pruriency for renown, rash yet timid, obstinate yet fickle, always in a hurry, yet always too late; the fierce and haughty energy which gave dignity to the eccentricities of Julius;[2] the soft and graceful manners which masked the insatiable ambition and the implacable hatred of Cæsar Borgia.

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[1] The Emperors of the Holy Roman Empire, between their election and their coronation at Rome, bore the style of King of the Romans. As none were crowned at Rome after Frederick III., who died in 1493, many emperors were not entitled strictly speaking to any higher title. The King of the Romans here referred to is Maximilian I., who was elected in 1493 and died in 1519. He was an active and enterprising, but shallow, statesman who interfered frequently in Italian affairs.

[2] The celebrated Cæsar Borgia, 1475-1507. The acknowledged son of Pope Alexander VI., he took orders and became an archbishop and a cardinal, but renounced the ecclesiastical calling in 1497. Having resolved to bring under the Pope's authority and his own the northern portion of the States of the Church (Romagna), then divided between a number of practically independent rulers, he sought the assistance of France. In return for a divorce from an unloved and inconvenient wife granted by Alexander, Louis XII. created Cæsar Duke of Valentinois and promised him the help he desired. After three successful campaigns Cæsar became master of Romagna, and in Machiavelli's opinion would have established a durable principality but for his father's death in 1503 and the election

We have mentioned Cæsar Borgia. It is impossible not to pause for a moment on the name of a man in whom the political morality of Italy was so strongly personified, partially blended with the sterner lineaments of the Spanish character. On two important occasions Machiavelli was admitted to his society; once, at the moment when Cæsar's splendid villany achieved its most signal triumph,[3] when he caught in one snare and crushed at one blow all his most formidable rivals; and again when, ex-

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of his enemy, Giuliano della Rovere, as Pope. As it was, he had to surrender Romagna to the new Pope, became an exile, was for some time imprisoned in Spain and met his death in 1507 fighting for the King of Navarre against Ferdinand.

[1] Louis, Duke of Orleans, 1462-1515, succeeded to the French throne on the death of his cousin, Charles VIII. In virtue of a claim derived from his grandmother, Valentina Visconti, he seized the Duchy of Milan. His predecessor's claim upon Naples he compromised by making a treaty of partition with Ferdinand of Arragon. He took part in the League of Cambray (see p. 95) for the spoliation of Venice. Yet all that he had gained in Italy by force or fraud he lost before his death. So far he justified Macaulay's invective, although in the administration of his own kingdom he showed both sense and goodness.

[2] Giuliano della Rovere, 1443-1513, was elected Pope in 1503 and took the style of Julius II. By temperament a statesman and a warrior, rather than a priest, he made it his principal business thoroughly to subjugate the States of the Church which were always slipping out of papal control. Julius also wished to expel the foreigners from Italy, but in this he was less earnest and by no means successful.

[3] When he lured his chief captains, whose fidelity he had reason to doubt, to meet him at Sinigaglia and arrested them there. Two were put to death immediately, the others later. This happened at the close of the year 1502.

hausted by disease and overwhelmed by misfortunes, which no human prudence could have averted, he was the prisoner of the deadliest enemy of his house. These interviews between the greatest speculative and the greatest practical statesman of the age are fully described in the Correspondence, and form perhaps the most interesting part of it. From some passages in The Prince, and perhaps also from some indistinct traditions, several writers have supposed a connection between those remarkable men much closer than ever existed. The Envoy has even been accused of prompting the crimes of the artful and merciless tyrant. But from the official documents it is clear that their intercourse, though ostensibly amicable, was in reality hostile. It cannot be doubted, however, that the imagination of Machiavelli was strongly impressed, and his speculations on government coloured, by the observations which he made on the singular character and equally singular fortunes of a man who under such disadvantages had achieved such exploits; who, when sensuality, varied through innumerable forms, could no longer stimulate his sated mind, found a more powerful and durable excitement in the intense thirst of empire and revenge; who emerged from the sloth and luxury of the Roman purple the first prince and general of the age;[1] who, trained in an unwarlike profession, formed a gallant army out of the dregs of an unwarlike people; who, after acquiring sovereignty by destroying his enemies,[2] acquired popularity by destroying his tools; who had begun to employ for the most salutary ends the power which he had attained by the most atrocious means; who tolerated within the sphere of his iron despotism no plunderer or oppressor but himself;[3] and who fell at last amidst the mingled curses and regrets of a people of whom his genius had been the wonder, and might have been the salvation. Some of those crimes of Borgia which to us appear the most odious would not, from causes which we have already considered, have struck an Italian of the fifteenth century with equal horror. Patriotic feeling also might induce Machiavelli to look with some indulgence and regret on the memory of the only leader who could have defended the independence of Italy against the confederate spoilers of Cambray.[1]

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[1] Able as Cæsar Borgia was, we may hesitate to put him as a statesman above his contemporaries, Ferdinand of Arragon or Henry VII. of England, or as a general above Gonsalvo of Cordova or Gaston de Foix.

[2] An allusion to the fate of Ramiro d'Orco, whom Cæsar employed to enforce submission in the cities of Romagna recently conquered. Ramiro having done his work thoroughly, but with so much harshness as to excite general hatred, Cæsar threw him into prison, put him to death, and caused his corpse, hewn in two pieces, to be exposed in the market-place of Cesena.

[3] Machiavelli remarks in *The Prince* that "when the duke had conquered Romagna and found that it had been governed by feeble rulers, who had rather despoiled than disciplined their subjects, and given them more matter of discord than of union, so that this province was full of robbery, intrigue, and every other kind of lawlessness, he judged that it needed a good government."

On this subject Machiavelli felt most strongly. Indeed the expulsion of the foreign tyrants, and the restoration of that golden age which had preceded the irruption of Charles the Eighth, were projects which, at that time, fascinated all the master-spirits of Italy. The magnificent vision delighted the great but ill-regulated mind of Julius. It divided with manuscripts and sauces, painters and falcons, the attention of the frivolous Leo. It prompted the generous treason of Morone.[2] It imparted a transient energy to the feeble mind and body of the last Sforza.[3] It excited for one moment an honest ambition in the false heart of Pescara.[4] Ferocity and insolence were not among the vices of the national character. To the discriminating cruelties of politicians, committed for great ends on select victims, the moral code of the Italians was too indulgent. But though they might have recourse to barbarity as an expedient, they did not require it as a stimulant. They turned with loathing from the atrocity of the strangers who seemed to love blood for its own sake, who, not content with subjugating, were impatient to destroy, who found a fiendish pleasure in razing magnificent cities, cutting the throats of enemies who cried for quarter, or suffocating an unarmed population by thousands in the caverns to which it had fled for safety.[1] Such were the cruelties which daily excited the terror and disgust of a people among whom, till lately, the worst that a soldier had to fear in a pitched battle was the loss of his horse and the expense of his ransom. The swinish intemperance of Switzerland, the wolfish avarice of Spain, the gross licentiousness of the French, indulged in violation of hospitality, of decency, of love itself, the wanton inhumanity which was common to all the invaders, had made them objects of deadly hatred to the inhabitants of the Peninsula. The wealth which had been accumulated during centuries of prosperity and repose was rapidly melting away. The intellectual superiority of the oppressed people only rendered them more keenly sensible of their political degradation. Literature and taste, indeed, still disguised with a flush of hectic loveliness and brilliancy the ravages of an incurable decay. The iron had not yet entered into the soul. The time was not yet come when eloquence was to be gagged, and reason to be hoodwinked, when the harp of the poet was to be hung on the willows of Arno, and the right hand of the painter to forget its cunning. Yet a discerning eye might even then have seen that genius and learning would not long survive the state of things from which they had sprung, and that the great men whose talents gave lustre to that melancholy period had been formed under the influence of happier days, and would leave no successors behind them. The times which shine with the greatest splendour in literary history are not always those to which the human mind is most indebted. Of this we may be convinced, by comparing the generation which follows them with that which had preceded them. The first fruits which are reaped under a bad system often spring from seed sown under a good one. Thus it was, in some measure, with the Augustan age. Thus it was with the age of Raphael and Ariosto, of Aldus and Vida.[2]

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[1] The league formed in 1508 between Maximilian, Louis XII. of France, Ferdinand of Arragon and Pope Julius II. for the destruction of Venice. The confederates easily conquered almost the whole of the possessions of Venice on the mainland of Italy, but Venice profited by their dissensions to regain almost everything that it had lost. Nevertheless, the weakness of Venice was demonstrated, and henceforth the Venetians thought only of preserving what they had gained, not of making further conquests.

[2] Girolamo Morone, 1450-1529, a distinguished servant of the last Dukes of Milan, at first had recourse to Spanish help to drive the French out of Milan, but after the French had been utterly routed at Pavia in 1525 he tried to form a league with them, the Venetians and the Pope against the Spaniards.

[3] Francesco Maria Sforza, who by the assistance of Charles V. and Leo X. became Duke of Milan in 1521. He approved the designs of Morone, but in the end was glad to be reconciled with the emperor. After his death in 1535 Charles took possession of the duchy.

[4] Ferdinand Francis d'Avalos, Marquis Pescara, d. 1525, a Neapolitan noble, distinguished himself in the Spanish service, especially at the battle of Pavia, and became commander-in-chief of the Spanish forces in Italy. Morone tried to seduce him with the prospect of the crown of Naples, but Pescara after long hesitation revealed everything to his master the emperor.

Machiavelli deeply regretted the misfortunes of his country, and clearly discerned the cause and the remedy. It was the military system of the Italian people which had extinguished their valour and discipline, and left their wealth an easy prey to every foreign plunderer. The Secretary projected a scheme alike honourable to his heart and to his intellect, for abolishing the use of mercenary troops, and for organising a national militia.

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[1] The sack of Capua in 1501 and of Brescia in 1512 by the French, that of Prato by the Spaniards in 1512, and still more that of Rome by the army of Charles V. in 1527 illustrate the ferocity of the foreign troops in Italy. In the war of the League of Cambrai over a thousand of the inhabitants of Vicenza, then subject to Venice, hid from the invaders in a disused quarry near the town. They were discovered and suffocated with smoke.

[2] Ludovico Ariosto, 1474-1533, author of the *Orlando Furioso*, was perhaps the greatest poet of the Italian Renaissance. Aldus Manutius, 1450-1515, whose real name was Teobaldo Mannucci, was celebrated as a printer and a scholar. Marco Girolamo Vida, 1489-1566, was one of the most distinguished Latin poets of the sixteenth century.

The exertions which he made to effect this great object ought alone to rescue his name from obloquy. Though his situation and his habits were pacific, he studied with intense assiduity the theory of war. He made himself master of all its details. The Florentine government entered into his views. A council of war was appointed. Levies were decreed. The indefatigable minister flew from place to place in order to superintend the execution of his design. The times were, in some respects, favourable to the experiment. The system of military tactics had undergone a great revolution. The cavalry was no longer considered as forming the strength of an army. The hours which a citizen could spare from his ordinary employments, though by no means sufficient to familiarise him with the exercise of a man-at-arms, might render him an useful foot-soldier. The dread of a foreign yoke, of plunder, massacre, and conflagration, might have conquered that repugnance to military pursuits which both the industry and the idleness of great towns commonly generate. For a time the scheme promised well. The new troops acquitted themselves respectably in the field. Machiavelli looked with parental rapture on the success of his plan, and began to hope that the arms of Italy might once more be formidable to the barbarians of the Tagus and the Rhine. But the tide of misfortune came on before the barriers which should have withstood it were prepared. For a time, indeed, Florence might be considered as peculiarly fortunate. Famine and sword and pestilence had devastated the fertile plains and stately cities of the Po. All the curses denounced of old against Tyre seemed to have fallen on Venice. Her merchants already stood afar off, lamenting for their great city. The time seemed near when the sea-weed should overgrow her silent Rialto, and the fisherman wash his nets in her deserted arsenal. Naples had been four times conquered and reconquered by tyrants equally indifferent to its welfare, and equally greedy for its spoils.[1] Florence, as yet, had only to endure degradation and extortion, to submit to the mandates of foreign powers, to buy over and over again, at an enormous price, what was already justly her own, to return thanks for being wronged, and to ask pardon for being in the right.[1] She was at length deprived of the blessings even of this infamous and servile repose. Her military and political institutions were swept away together. The Medici returned, in the train of foreign invaders, from their long exile. The policy of Machiavelli was abandoned; and his public services were requited with poverty, imprisonment, and torture.[2]

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[1] The first time by Charles VIII. of France in 1494; the second time by Ferdinand of Arragon, who expelled the French and restored Naples to his kinsman Ferdinand II. in 1496; the third time by Louis XII. of France and Ferdinand

The fallen statesman still clung to his project with unabated ardour. With the view of vindicating it from some popular objections and of refuting some prevailing errors on the subject of military science, he wrote his seven books on the Art of War.[3] This excellent work is in the form of a dialogue. The opinions of the writer are put into the mouth of Fabrizio Colonna, a powerful nobleman of the Ecclesiastical State, and an officer of distinguished merit in the service of the King of Spain. Colonna visits Florence on his way from Lombardy to his own domains. He is invited to meet some friends at the house of Cosimo Rucellai, an amiable and accomplished young man, whose early death Machiavelli feelingly deplores. After partaking of an elegant entertainment, they retire from the heat into the most shady recesses of the garden. Fabrizio is struck by the sight of some uncommon plants. Cosimo says that, though rare, in modern days, they are frequently mentioned by the classical authors, and that his grandfather, like many other Italians, amused himself with practising the ancient methods of gardening. Fabrizio expresses his regret that those who, in later times,

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of Arragon acting in concert in 1501; and finally after the allies had quarrelled over the spoil by Ferdinand, whose general, Gonsalvo, gained a complete victory over the French on the Garigliano at the end of 1503.

[1] This sentence refers chiefly to the affair of Pisa. That city, which since 1406 had been unwillingly subject to Florence, took the opportunity afforded by the passage of Charles VIII. through Tuscany to become independent. Charles, at first favourable to Pisa, afterwards promised to restore it to Florence for 120,000 florins. This he failed to do. He and his successor, distracted by their contradictory obligations to Florence and to Pisa, acted weakly and dishonestly by both.

[2] The Medici had been expelled from Florence on the approach of Charles VIII. in 1494, and the restored republican Government leant on an alliance with the French. But in 1512, after the battle of Ravenna and the death of Gaston de Foix, the French lost nearly all that they held in Italy. The powers allied against France, the Pope, the Emperor, the Venetians, and Ferdinand of Arragon, then resolved to restore the Medici, which was performed by the Cardinal, Giovanni de Medici, afterwards Leo X., with the help of a Spanish army.

[3] Published in 1521.

affected the manners of the old Romans should select for imitation the most trifling pursuits. This leads to a conversation on the decline of military discipline and on the best means of restoring it. The institution of the Florentine militia is ably defended; and several improvements are suggested in the details.

The Swiss and the Spaniards were, at that time, regarded as the best soldiers in Europe. The Swiss battalion consisted of pikemen, and bore a close resemblance to the Greek phalanx. The Spaniards, like the soldiers of Rome, were armed with the sword and the shield. The victories of Flamininus and Æmilius over the Macedonian kings seem to prove the superiority of the weapons used by the legions. The same experiment had been recently tried with the same result at the battle of Ravenna,[1] one of those tremendous days into which human folly and wickedness compress the whole devastation of a famine or a plague. In that memorable conflict, the infantry of Arragon, the old companions of Gonsalvo,[2] deserted by all their allies, hewed a passage through the thickest of the imperial pikes, and effected an unbroken retreat, in the face of the gendarmerie of De Foix, and the renowned artillery of Este. Fabrizio, or rather Machiavelli, proposes to combine the two systems, to arm the foremost lines with the pike for the purpose of repulsing cavalry, and those in the rear with the sword, as being a weapon better adapted for every other purpose. Throughout the work, the author expresses the highest admiration of the military science of the ancient Romans, and the greatest contempt for the maxims which had been in vogue amongst the Italian commanders of the preceding generation. He prefers infantry to cavalry, and fortified camps to fortified towns. He is inclined to substitute rapid movements and decisive engagements for the languid and dilatory operations of his countrymen. He attaches very little importance to the invention of gunpowder. Indeed he seems to think that it ought scarcely to produce any change in the mode of arming or of disposing troops. The general testimony of historians, it must be allowed, seems to prove that the ill-constructed and ill-served artillery of those times, though useful in a siege, was of little value on the field of battle.

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[1] Fought on the 11th of April, 1512, between the French under Gaston de Foix, supported by the troops of the Emperor and the Duke of Ferrara, and the combined armies of the Pope, the Venetians and Ferdinand of Arragon. The French gained the day but lost their general. Forty thousand men were engaged and ten thousand fell. The Dukes of Ferrara were of the House of Este. Their artillery was at that time reckoned the finest in Italy.

[2] Gonzalo Fernandez de Aguilar, 1453-1515, more commonly known as Gonsalvo de Cordova, or the Great Captain, first distinguished himself in the war of Ferdinand and Isabella against Granada. In 1495 he was sent to help Ferdinand of Naples who had recently lost his kingdom to Charles VIII. of France. In three years he expelled the French from every part of the kingdom. In 1501 he received the command of the Spanish army, employed first to conquer Naples with the help of the French and then to drive the French out. He was again entirely successful. From 1503 to 1507 he governed Naples as viceroy, but then was recalled by Ferdinand and spent the rest of his life in retirement. He was the first great general of the period of Spanish supremacy in war.

Of the tactics of Machiavelli we will not venture to give an opinion: but we are certain that his book is most able and interesting. As a commentary on the history of his times, it is invaluable. The ingenuity, the grace, and the perspicuity of the style, and the eloquence and animation of particular passages, must give pleasure even to readers who take no interest in the subject.

The Prince and the Discourses on Livy were written after the fall of the Republican Government. The former was dedicated to the Young Lorenzo di Medici. This circumstance seems to have disgusted the contemporaries of the writer far more than the doctrines which have rendered the name of the work odious in later times. It was considered as an indication of political apostasy. The fact, however, seems to have been that Machiavelli, despairing of the liberty of Florence, was inclined to support any government which might preserve her independence. The interval which separated a democracy and a despotism, Soderini[1] and Lorenzo, seemed to vanish when compared with the difference between the former and the present state of Italy, between the security, the opulence, and the repose which she had enjoyed under its native rulers, and the misery in which she had been plunged since the fatal year in which the first foreign tyrant had descended from the Alps. The noble and pathetic exhortation with which The Prince concludes shows how strongly the writer felt upon this subject.

The Prince traces the progress of an ambitious man, the Discourses the progress of an ambitious people. The same principles on which, in the former work, the elevation of an individual is explained, are applied in the latter, to the longer duration and more complex interest of a society. To a modern statesman the form of the Discourses may appear to be puerile.

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[1] Piero de Tommaso Soderini, 1452-1522, was appointed in 1502 Gonfalonier of the Florentine Republic and continued to hold this, the greatest office in the State, until the return of the Medici in 1512. He was an upright, amiable and popular man, but in Machiavelli's judgment too relenting and scrupulous for unsettled times.

In truth Livy is not an historian on whom implicit reliance can be placed, even in cases where he must have possessed considerable means of information. And the first Decade, to which Machiavelli has confined himself, is scarcely entitled to more credit than our Chronicle of British Kings who reigned before the Roman invasion. But the commentator is indebted to Livy for little more than a few texts which he might as easily have extracted from the Vulgate or the Decameron. The whole train of thought is original.

On the peculiar immorality which has rendered The Prince unpopular, and which is almost equally discernible in the Discourses, we have already given our opinion at length. We have attempted to show that it belonged rather to the age than to the man, that it was a partial taint, and by no means implied general depravity. We cannot however deny that it is a great blemish, and that it considerably diminishes the pleasure which, in other respects, those works must afford to every intelligent mind.

It is, indeed, impossible to conceive a more healthful and vigorous constitution of the understanding than that which these works indicate. The qualities of the active and the contemplative statesman appear to have been blended in the mind of the writer into a rare and exquisite harmony. His skill in the details of business had not been acquired at the expense of his general powers. It had not rendered his mind less comprehensive; but it had served to correct his speculations, and to impart to them that vivid and practical character which so widely distinguishes them from the vague theories of most political philosophers.

Every man who has seen the world knows that nothing is so useless as a general maxim. If it be very moral and very true, it may serve for a copy to a charity-boy. If, like those of Rochefoucault,[1] it be sparkling and whimsical, it may make an excellent motto for an essay. But few indeed of the many wise apophthegms which have been uttered, from the time of the Seven Sages of Greece to that of Poor Richard,[2] have prevented a single foolish action. We give the highest and the most peculiar praise to the precepts of Machiavelli when we say that they may frequently be of real use in regulating conduct, not so much because they are more just or more profound than those which might be culled from other authors, as because they can be more readily applied to the problems of real life.

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[1] François, Duc de La Rochefoucault, 1613-1680, an accomplished man of the world and author of the famous *Maxims* which, for acuteness of thought and perfection of form, deserve a more respectful reference.

[2] The imaginary person upon whom Benjamin Franklin fathered his shrewd sayings.

There are errors in these works. But they are errors which a writer, situated like Machiavelli, could scarcely avoid. They arise, for the most part, from a single defect which appears to us to pervade his whole system. In his political scheme, the means had been more deeply considered than the ends. The great principle, that societies and laws exist only for the purpose of increasing the sum of private happiness, is not recognised with sufficient clearness. The good of the body, distinct from the good of the members, and sometimes hardly compatible with the good of the members, seems to be the object which he proposes to himself. Of all political fallacies, this has perhaps had the widest and the most mischievous operation. The state of society in the little commonwealths of Greece, the close connection and mutual dependence of the citizens, and the severity of the laws of war, tended to encourage an opinion which, under such circumstances, could hardly be called erroneous. The interests of every individual were inseparably bound up with those of the state. An invasion destroyed his corn-fields and vineyards, drove him from his home, and compelled him to encounter all the hardships of a military life. A treaty of peace restored him to security and comfort. A victory doubled the number of his slaves. A defeat perhaps made him a slave himself. When Pericles, in the Peloponnesian war, told the Athenians, that, if their country triumphed, their private losses would speedily be repaired, but that, if their arms failed of success, every individual amongst them would probably be ruined, he spoke no more than the truth. He spoke to men whom the tribute of vanquished cities supplied with food and clothing, with the luxury of the bath and the amusements of the theatre, on whom the greatness of their country conferred rank, and before whom the members of less prosperous communities trembled; to men who, in case of a change in the public fortunes, would, at least, be deprived of every comfort and every distinction which they enjoyed. To be butchered on the smoking ruins of their city, to be dragged in chains to a slave-market, to see one child torn from them to dig in the quarries of Sicily, and another to guard the harams of Persepolis, these were the frequent and probable consequences of national calamities. Hence, among the Greeks, patriotism became a governing principle, or rather an ungovernable passion. Their legislators and their philosophers took it for granted that, in providing for the strength and greatness of the state, they sufficiently provided for the happiness of the people. The writers of the Roman empire lived under despots, into whose dominion a hundred nations were melted down, and whose gardens would have covered the little commonwealths of Phlius and Platæa. Yet they continued to employ the same language, and to cant about the duty of sacrificing every thing to a country to which they owed nothing.[1]

Causes similar to those which had influenced the disposition of the Greeks operated powerfully on the less vigorous and daring character of the Italians. The Italians, like the Greeks, were members of small communities. Every man was deeply interested in the welfare of the society to which he belonged, a partaker in its wealth and its poverty, in its glory and its shame. In the age of Machiavelli this was peculiarly the case. Public events had produced an immense sum of misery to private citizens. The Northern invaders had brought want to their boards, infamy to their beds, fire to their roofs, and the knife to their throats. It was natural that a man who lived in times like these should overrate the importance of those measures by which a nation is rendered formidable to its neighbours, and undervalue those which make it prosperous within itself.

Nothing is more remarkable in the political treatises of Machiavelli than the fairness of mind which they indicate. It appears where the author is in the wrong, almost as strongly as where he is in the right. He never advances a false opinion because it is new or splendid, because he can clothe it in a happy phrase, or defend it by an ingenious sophism. His errors are at once explained by a reference to the circumstances in which he was placed. They evidently were not sought out; they lay in his way, and could scarcely be avoided. Such mistakes must necessarily be committed by early speculators in every science.

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[1] It is hard to see why the citizens of the Roman Empire owed nothing to the State which secured to them the safest, most orderly and most civilised existence ever known until then. The great principle, as Macaulay terms it, that societies exist only to increase the sum of private happiness is much too vague to be a help in practice. Some portion of immediate enjoyment must always be sacrificed to our future welfare; else why impose taxes? In certain emergencies all agree that the State may call on the citizen to sacrifice life itself for the public safety. Private happiness is thus incessantly sacrificed to public strength. On the other side it is equally true that there is no lasting strength for the community apart from the numbers and spirit and prosperity of its individual members. The balance between immediate and remote good cannot be struck according to any simple formula; it must be computed by wisdom and experience.

In this respect it is amusing to compare The Prince and the Discourses with the Spirit of Laws. Montesquieu[1] enjoys, perhaps, a wider celebrity than any political writer of modern Europe. Something he doubtless owes to his merit, but much more to his fortune. He had the good luck of a Valentine. He caught the eye of the French nation, at the moment when it was waking from the long sleep of political and religious bigotry; and, in consequence, he became a favourite. The English, at that time, considered a Frenchman who talked about constitutional checks and fundamental laws as a prodigy not less astonishing than the learned pig or the musical infant. Specious but shallow, studious of effect, indifferent to truth, eager to build a system, but careless of collecting those materials out of which alone a sound and durable system can be built, the lively President constructed theories as rapidly and as slightly as card-houses, no sooner projected than completed, no sooner completed than blown away, no sooner blown away than forgotten. Machiavelli errs only because his experience, acquired in a very peculiar state of society, could not always enable him to calculate the effect of institutions differing from those of which he had observed the operation. Montesquieu errs, because he has a fine thing to say, and is resolved to say it. If the phænomena which lie before him will not suit his purpose, all history must be ransacked. If nothing established by authentic testimony can be racked or chipped to suit his Procrustean hypothesis, he puts up with some monstrous fable about Siam, or Bantam, or Japan, told by writers compared with whom Lucian and Gulliver were veracious, liars by a double right, as travellers and as Jesuits.

Propriety of thought, and propriety of diction, are commonly found together. Obscurity and affectation are the two greatest faults of style. Obscurity of expression generally springs from confusion of ideas; and the same wish to dazzle at any cost which produces affectation in the manner of a writer, is likely to produce sophistry in his reasonings. The judicious and candid mind of Machiavelli shows itself in his luminous, manly, and polished language. The style of Montesquieu, on the other hand, indicates in every page a lively and ingenious, but an unsound mind. Every trick of expression, from the mysterious conciseness of an oracle to the flippancy of a Parisian coxcomb, is employed to disguise the fallacy of some positions, and the triteness of others. Absurdities are brightened into epigrams; truisms are darkened into enigmas. It is with difficulty that the strongest eye can sustain the glare with which some parts are illuminated, or penetrate the shade in which others are concealed.

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[1] Charles Louis de Secondat, Baron de la Brède et de Montesquieu, 1689-1754, published in 1748 his *Esprit des Lois*, the first serious attempt made in modern times towards a historical inquiry into institutions. It aimed at tracing the relation of laws to national character and civilisation. Montesquieu had genius and industry although he was too prone to believe in marvels and express himself in epigrams. The judgment passed upon him in the text is little better than a freak and an impertinence.

The political works of Machiavelli derive a peculiar interest from the mournful earnestness which he manifests whenever he touches on topics connected with the calamities of his native land. It is difficult to conceive any situation more painful than that of a great man, condemned to watch the lingering agony of an exhausted country, to tend it during the alternate fits of stupefaction and raving which precede its dissolution, and to see the symptoms of vitality disappear one by one, till nothing is left but coldness, darkness, and corruption. To this joyless and thankless duty was Machiavelli called. In the energetic language of the prophet, he was "mad for the sight of his eyes which he saw,"[1] disunion in the council, effeminacy in the camp, liberty extinguished, commerce decaying, national honour sullied, an enlightened and flourishing people given over to the ferocity of ignorant savages. Though his opinions had not escaped the contagion of that political immorality which was common among his countrymen, his natural disposition seems to have been rather stern and impetuous than pliant and artful. When the misery and degradation of Florence and the foul outrage which he had himself sustained recur to his mind, the smooth craft of his profession and his nation is exchanged for the honest bitterness of scorn and anger. He speaks like one sick of the calamitous times and abject people among whom his lot is cast. He pines for the strength and glory of ancient Rome, for the fasces of Brutus and the sword of Scipio, the gravity of the curule chair, and the bloody pomp of the triumphal sacrifice. He seems to be transported back to the days when eight hundred thousand Italian warriors sprung to arms at the rumour of a Gallic invasion. He breathes all the spirit of those intrepid and haughty senators who forgot the dearest ties of nature in the claims of public duty, who looked with disdain on the elephants and on the gold of Pyrrhus, and listened with unaltered composure to the tremendous tidings of Cannæ. Like an ancient temple deformed by the barbarous architecture of a later age, his character acquires an interest from the very circumstances which debase it. The original proportions are rendered more striking by the contrast which they present to the mean and incongruous additions.

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[1] Deut. xxviii. 34.

The influence of the sentiments which we have described was not apparent in his writings alone. His enthusiasm, barred from the career which it would have selected for itself, seems to have found a vent in desperate levity. He enjoyed a vindictive pleasure in outraging the opinions of a society which he despised. He became careless of the decencies which were expected from a man so highly distinguished in the literary and political world. The sarcastic bitterness of his conversation disgusted those who were more inclined to accuse his licentiousness than their own degeneracy, and who were unable to conceive the strength of those emotions which are concealed by the jests of the wretched, and by the follies of the wise.

The historical works of Machiavelli still remain to be considered. The life of Castruccio Castracani[1] will occupy us for a very short time, and would scarcely have demanded our notice, had it not attracted a much greater share of public attention than it deserves. Few books, indeed, could be more interesting than a careful and judicious account, from such a pen, of the illustrious Prince of Lucca, the most eminent of those Italian chiefs, who, like Pisistratus and Gelon, acquired a power felt rather than seen, and resting, not on law or on prescription, but on the public favour and on their great personal qualities. Such a work would exhibit to us the real nature of that species of sovereignty, so singular and so often misunderstood, which the Greeks denominated tyranny, and which, modified in some degree by the feudal system, reappeared in the commonwealths of Lombardy and Tuscany. But this little composition of Machiavelli is in no sense a history. It has no pretensions to fidelity. It is a trifle, and not a very successful trifle. It is scarcely more authentic than the novel of Belphegor, and is very much duller.

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[1] Castruccio Castracani, 1283-1328, a member of the Ghibelline party in Lucca, was driven into exile in 1300, but returned in 1314, and in 1320 contrived to become despot of his native city. As head of the Ghibellines of Tuscany he made successful war on Florence and formed a large principality which included Pisa, Pistoia and Volterra. In 1327 he was created a Duke by the Emperor Lewis IV.

The last great work of this illustrious man was the history of his native city. It was written by command of the Pope, who, as chief of the house of Medici, was at that time sovereign of Florence. The characters of Cosmo, of Piero, and of Lorenzo,[1] are, however, treated with a freedom and impartiality equally honourable to the writer and to the patron. The miseries and humiliations of dependence, the bread which is more bitter than every other food, the stairs which are more painful than every other ascent, had not broken the spirit of Machiavelli.[2] The most corrupting post in a corrupting profession had not depraved the generous heart of Clement.

The History does not appear to be the fruit of much industry or research. It is unquestionably inaccurate. But it is elegant, lively, and picturesque, beyond any other in the Italian language. The reader, we believe, carries away from it a more vivid and a more faithful impression of the national character and manners than from more correct accounts. The truth is, that the book belongs rather to ancient than to modern literature. It is in the style, not of Davila [3] and Clarendon, but of Herodotus and Tacitus. The classical histories may almost be called romances founded in fact. The relation is, no doubt, in all its principal points, strictly true. But the numerous little incidents which heighten the interest, the words, the gestures, the looks, are evidently furnished by the imagination of the author. The fashion of later times is different. A more exact narrative is given by the writer. It may be doubted whether more exact notions are conveyed to the reader. The best portraits are perhaps those in which there is a slight mixture of caricature, and we are not certain that the best histories are not those in which a little of the exaggeration of fictitious narrative is judiciously employed. Something is lost in accuracy; but much is gained in effect.

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[1] Cosmo or Cosimo de Medici, 1389-1464, was the founder of the ascendency of his house in Florence. Piero, his son, born in 1416, succeeded to his power and died in 1469. Piero's son Lorenzo, commonly styled the Magnificent, 1449-1492, although professing himself a private citizen, was really a sovereign.

[2] Suggested by the well-known lines of Dante:—

> "Tu proverai sì come sa de sale
> Lo pane altrui, e com' è duro calle
> Lo scendere e il salir per l' altrui scale."
> —*Paradiso*, canto 17, lines 58-60.

[3] Henrico-Caterino Davila, 1576-1631, an Italian by birth, whose father was attracted to France by the friendship of Catharine de Medici. Davila himself, after many years spent in the service of her sons and of Henry IV., returned to Italy where he wrote a *History of the Civil Wars of France* which soon gained and long preserved a very high reputation.

The fainter lines are neglected; but the great characteristic features are imprinted on the mind for ever.

The History terminates with the death of Lorenzo de' Medici. Machiavelli had, it seems, intended to continue his narrative to a later period. But his death prevented the execution of his design; and the melancholy task of recording the desolation and shame of Italy devolved on Guicciardini.

Machiavelli lived long enough to see the commencement of the last struggle for Florentine liberty.[1] Soon after his death monarchy was finally established, not such a monarchy as that of which Cosmo had laid the foundations deep in the institutions and feelings of his countrymen, and which Lorenzo had embellished with the trophies of every science and every art; but a loathsome tyranny, proud and mean, cruel and feeble, bigoted and lascivious. The character of Machiavelli was hateful to the new masters of Italy; and those parts of his theory which were in strict accordance with their own daily practice afforded a pretext for blackening his memory. His works were misrepresented by the learned, misconstrued by the ignorant, censured by the church, abused with all the rancour of simulated virtue, by the tools of a base government, and the priests of a baser superstition. The name of the man whose genius had illuminated all the dark places of policy, and to whose patriotic wisdom an oppressed people had owed their last chance of emancipation and revenge, passed into a proverb of infamy. For more than two hundred years his bones lay undistinguished. At length, an English nobleman paid the last honours to the greatest statesman of Florence.[2] In the church of Santa Croce a monument was erected to his memory, which is contemplated with reverence by all who can distinguish the virtues of a great mind through the corruptions of a degenerate age, and which will be approached with still deeper homage when the object to which his public life was devoted shall be attained, when the foreign yoke shall be broken, when a second Procida[3] shall avenge the wrongs of Naples, when a happier Rienzi shall restore the good estate of Rome, when the streets of Florence and Bologna shall again resound with their ancient war-cry, *Popolo; popolo; muoiano i tiranni!*[1]

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[1] After the estrangement of Clement VII. from Charles V. and the sack of Rome in 1527, the power of the Medici seemed extinct and they were expelled from Florence. But after the reconciliation of the Pope with the Emperor, Florence was besieged by an imperial army. The surrender of the city in August, 1530, was followed by the final restoration of the Medici.

[2] George Nassau Clavering, third Earl Cowper, who had become almost naturalised in Florence, actively supported the suggestion of Alberto Rimbotti for a monument to Machiavilli. It was erected in 1787.

[3] After the conquest of Naples by Charles of Anjou in 1266 the French indulged in such tyranny as to provoke a rising of the Sicilians in March of 1282, the well-known Sicilian Vespers. All the Frenchmen in the island were massacred. Giovanni di Procida, a Sicilian gentleman, was the chief prompter of the revolt.

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[1] "The people! the people! Death to the tyrants." From Machiavelli's *History of Florence*, book iii., describing the entry of a band of exiles into the city in 1397.

HALLAM

SEPTEMBER, 1828

NOTE ON THE ESSAY

IN reviewing Hallam's *Constitutional History* Macaulay has stated his own conception of the history of England in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. That he has done this with vehemence and exaggeration may be in some degree excused when we remember how young he still was. A more serious fault is the habit of regarding the events of the period which began with the Reformation and ended with the Restoration in the light of the distinction between Whig and Tory. It is true that in a sense the Puritans were the predecessors of the Whigs, and the Cavaliers the predecessors of the Tories. But it is equally true that whilst party distinctions prior to the Restoration were above all theological, party distinctions since the Restoration have been primarily political. Professor Gardiner has shown that ecclesiastical differences had most to do with the schism in the Long Parliament and the resulting civil war. Macaulay in this and other essays has dwelt too much upon the constitutional questions at issue, and even where he has touched upon religious controversies he has failed to apprehend their exact meaning because his mind was warped by the party considerations peculiar to his own time.

As the French Revolution had been in one aspect a revolt against a Church by law established and as it had achieved political equality between different confessions, that timid, narrow and obstructive Toryism which was generated in the long war with France cherished with peculiar affection every remnant of religious intolerance in our laws and made it a point of honour to keep Nonconformists and Roman Catholics in a condition of political inferiority. Writers who shared this bias endeavoured to show that the rulers of the Church of England had always been in the right and that those who resisted them had always been in the wrong. They were not content to view the failings of Elizabeth and Whitgift or of Charles and Laud with that indulgence which is due to imperfect human beings invested with great power and confronted with great difficulties. No indulgence could be needed where no failings were admitted. When Elizabeth and her Parliament inflicted the pains of treason upon the priest who reconciled an English subject to the Church of Rome, they were only taking a justifiable political precaution. When the Star Chamber sentenced intemperate Puritan polemics to lose their ears it only showed its vigilance in maintaining public order and decency. This is the uncritical view of ecclesiastical history set forth in such a party pamphlet as Southey's *Book of the Church.* It called forth an almost equally uncritical version of history adapted to the needs of that party which thought religious inequality a bad thing. If the Tories regarded the Church of England as the unsullied vessel of primitive Christian truth the Whigs would regard her as the arbitrary creation of Tudor pride and worldliness. If the Tories asserted that the Church of England had never or scarcely ever persecuted, the Whigs would assert that the stigma of persecution attached peculiarly to the Church of England. If the Tories made out Cranmer to be saint and martyr, the Whigs had to brand him as knave and sycophant. If the Tories represented Laud as the noblest of Christian prelates, a man of commanding genius and apostolic zeal, the Whigs must represent him as the familiar imp of a spiteful witch and declare that only the imbecility of his intellect could make us forget the vices of his heart. We are not here concerned to arbitrate between these conflicting theories or to measure the elements of truth which either may contain. Everybody who takes an interest in such matters will perform the process somewhat differently. Questions of continuity and identity being always questions of degree are peculiarly apt to be decided by prejudice or sentiment. That the English Reformation was guided and controlled rather by statesmen than by men of deep religious feeling or precise religious conviction most well-informed persons would allow, although they might not be prepared to subscribe Macaulay's furious philippic. That the reproach of religious intolerance attaches, although in unequal degrees, to all the ecclesiastical parties of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, nobody is now so ignorant as to deny. If here and there an extraordinary man had risen to the conception of tolerance he had no effect upon public opinion, and if he chanced to gain power too often wanted the courage to act what he believed. Nor were these exceptional men confined to one party. More and Erasmus were more tolerant in principle than Luther and Calvin. Against Roger Williams among the Puritans we may set Chillingworth among the Arminians. The common herd of all colours, Romanist and Reformer, clergy and laity, prince and peasant, were still in bondage to the mediæval belief that religious uniformity is as essential to the safety of the commonwealth as it is to the salvation of the individual. This all but universal prejudice rendered it impossible to compose the disputes within the Church of England under Charles I.

We must also remember that the religious conflict of that time was not, as under Charles II., a conflict between a dominant Church and persecuted sects, but between two parties within the bounds of the Church, each wishing to reform the Church in its own way and resolved not merely to get freedom of conscience for itself, but also to suppress the freedom of its antagonist. Had the Presbyterians got the upper hand they no less than the bishops would have enforced uniformity of doctrine, discipline and ceremonial. As for the Roman Catholics and the petty Protestant sects which were beginning to spring up outside the Church, neither Presbyterian nor prelatist would have spared them, although Laud might have borne hardest upon the sectaries and Pym upon the Catholics. Was Macaulay then quite unreasonable in regarding the Puritans as the champions of liberty? By no means. The Puritans did render an inestimable service to liberty and civilisation by manfully asserting for themselves those rights of conscience which they failed to recognise in others. Neither the force of tradition nor the attraction of example nor the fear of punishment could induce them to think by deputy or to accept without question the beliefs that bore the stamp of office. The most precious of all liberties, the liberty to form and to express our own opinions, was asserted for mankind by the victors of Marston and Naseby; but the Presbyterian hardly understood at all, and the Independent only half understood the value of their conquest. It was the rebellion, not the reign, of the Puritans which made England free. Later ages have gained from the conflict of Roundhead with Cavalier, the benefit which neither party intended to bestow.

When Macaulay turns from ecclesiastical to political history, he always becomes more instructive. Even here, however, he is too much preoccupied with the principles of the eighteenth to enter fully into the spirit of the seventeenth century. In his pages the constitution appears more mature and the restraints upon prerogative more definite than they actually were. His judgment of Charles I. is distorted by political passion, to the point of mistaking a weak and perverse man for a monster of wickedness. Charles, as Professor Gardiner has so well shown, was destitute of imagination and therefore of insight. Easily led by persons whom he liked, usually persons as unwise as himself, he was intractable either to a higher intelligence or to the overwhelming force of events. Criminally insincere he would, when tempted, make conflicting promises to all parties without seriously meaning to keep them to any, and yet probably was never conscious of having done anything base, save when he deserted Strafford. For nursed in the doctrine of absolute monarchy, and believing that he had received from God a plenary power which, for the good of his subjects themselves, he must not allow to be impaired, he honestly thought that all who opposed him must be either very foolish or very wicked, and deceived them with as little hesitation as the ordinary man feels in deceiving a lunatic or a criminal. Unfit for his high office, he ensured his own doom without losing his self-respect. Nor can the whole blame of the Civil War be justly imputed to him. To adapt the Tudor system to the wants of a new age was a task demanding such wisdom and self-denial as few men have possessed. But James had not merely imparted to Charles a false theory of the English constitution; he had forced upon the English people the question never distinctly stated before as to the power in the last resort supreme in England. Thenceforward a revolution, whether to the profit of the

Crown or of the Parliament, was assured. Macaulay comes nearest the truth when he says:—

"Those who conceive that the Parliamentary leaders were desirous merely to maintain the old constitution, and those who represent them as conspiring to subvert it, are equally in error. The old constitution, as we have attempted to show, could not be maintained."

But then he should have allowed Charles and Wentworth as well as Pym and Hampden the benefit of this acute observation. On the other hand Macaulay was perhaps the first historian, not a Nonconformist, to appreciate the genius of Cromwell. This is all the more creditable since Cromwell squared almost as ill with Whig as with Tory maxims of policy. If he cut off the head of a king, he also expelled a House of Commons. In writing about the Restoration and the Revolution, Macaulay once more yields to his bias against the Stuarts and his love of high colouring. The real Lord Shaftesbury was not a nice or scrupulous man, but Macaulay loads him with crimes which he did not commit. The politicians who served William III. were indifferent patriots, but their intrigues with James were often no more than a feint designed to save their heads and estates in case a counter-revolution, which they neither desired nor furthered, should by ill chance take effect.

Since Macaulay's death, the history of the reigns of James I. and Charles I. has been rewritten by Professor Gardiner with such unwearied industry and in such a spirit of unswerving justice, as to enable us to enter into the thoughts and feelings of that age in a degree formerly impossible. Professor Gardiner has rendered previous histories more or less obsolete, and to him the reader must turn for many corrections in the essay which follows.

HALLAM

The Constitutional History of England, from the Accession of Henry VII. to the Death of George II. BY HENRY HALLAM. In 2 vols. 1827.

HISTORY, at least in its state of ideal perfection, is a compound of poetry and philosophy. It impresses general truths on the mind by a vivid representation of particular characters and incidents. But, in fact, the two hostile elements of which it consists have never been known to form a perfect amalgamation; and at length, in our own time, they have been completely and professedly separated. Good histories, in the proper sense of the word, we have not. But we have good historical romances, and good historical essays. The imagination and the reason, if we may use a legal metaphor, have made partition of a province of literature of which they were formerly seized *per my et per tout;*[1] and now they hold their respective portions in severalty, instead of holding the whole in common.

To make the past present, to bring the distant near, to place us in the society of a great man or on the eminence which overlooks the field of a mighty battle, to invest with the reality of human flesh and blood beings whom we are too much inclined to consider as personified qualities in an allegory, to call up our ancestors before us with all their peculiarities of language, manners, and garb, to show us over their houses, to seat us at their tables, to rummage their old-fashioned wardrobes, to explain the uses of their ponderous furniture, these parts of the duty which properly belongs to the historian, have been appropriated by the historical novelist.[2] On the other hand, to extract the philosophy of history, to direct our judgment of events and men, to trace the connection of causes and effects, and to draw from the occurrences of former times general lessons of moral and political wisdom, has become the business of a distinct class of writers.

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[1] Joint tenants of an estate were in technical language said to have seisin or possession, *per my et per tout*, literally by the half and by the whole.

[2] Macaulay's own *History of England* was a notable attempt to reconquer this province from the historical novelist.

Of the two kinds of composition into which history has been thus divided, the one may be compared to a map, the other to a painted landscape. The picture, though it places the country before us, does not enable us to ascertain with accuracy the dimensions, the distances, and the angles. The map is not a work of imitative art. It presents no scene to the imagination; but it gives us exact information as to the bearings of the various points, and is a more useful companion to the traveller or the general than the painted landscape could be, though it were the grandest that ever Rosa[1] peopled with outlaws, or the sweetest over which Claude[1] ever poured the mellow effulgence of a setting sun.

It is remarkable that the practice of separating the two ingredients of which history is composed has become prevalent on the Continent as well as in this country. Italy has already produced a historical novel, of high merit and of still higher promise.[2] In France, the practice has been carried to a length somewhat whimsical. M. Sismondi[3] publishes a grave and stately history of the Merovingian Kings, very valuable, and a little tedious. He then sends forth as a companion to it a novel, in which he attempts to give a lively representation of characters and manners. This course, as it seems to us, has all the disadvantages of a division of labour, and none of its advantages. We understand the expediency of keeping the functions of cook and coachman distinct. The dinner will be better dressed, and the horses better managed. But where the two situations are united, as in the Maître Jacques[4] of Molière, we do not see that the matter is much mended by the solemn form with which the pluralist passes from one of his employments to the other.

We manage these things better in England. Sir Walter Scott gives us a novel; Mr. Hallam a critical and argumentative history. Both are occupied with the same matter. But the former looks at it with the eye of a sculptor. His intention is to give an express and lively image of its external form. The latter is an anatomist. His task is to dissect the subject to its inmost recesses, and to lay bare before us all the springs of motion and all the causes of decay.[1]

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[1] Salvator Rosa, 1615-1673, who was considered a hundred years ago supreme in depicting savage landscape. His fame has suffered by later changes of taste and in particular by Ruskin's denunciation. Claude Lorraine, 1600-1682, is too well known to need comment.

[2] *I Promessi Sposi*, by Alessandro Manzoni, 1785-1873, published in 1822.

[3] Jean Charles Leonard de Sismondi, 1773-1842. His history of the Merovingian dynasty, the first Frankish dynasty which ruled in Gaul after the overthrow of the Roman power, forms part of his history of France, an immense work on which he laboured more than twenty years. The novel to which Macaulay refers was entitled *Julia Severa ou l'an* 492 and appeared in 1822.

[4] Maître Jacques performed both of these offices for Harpagon, the hero of Molière's comedy "L'Avare."

Mr. Hallam is, on the whole, far better qualified than any other writer of our time for the office which he has undertaken. He has great industry and great acuteness. His knowledge is extensive, various, and profound. His mind is equally distinguished by the amplitude of its grasp, and by the delicacy of its tact. His speculations have none of that vagueness which is the common fault of political philosophy. On the contrary, they are strikingly practical, and teach us not only the general rule, but the mode of applying it to solve particular cases. In this respect they often remind us of the Discourses of Machiavelli.[2]

The style is sometimes open to the charge of harshness. We have also here and there remarked a little of that unpleasant trick, which Gibbon brought into fashion, the trick, we mean, of telling a story by implication and allusion. Mr. Hallam, however, has an excuse which Gibbon had not. His work is designed for readers who are already acquainted with the ordinary books on English history, and who can therefore unriddle these little enigmas without difficulty. The manner of the book is, on the whole, not unworthy of the matter. The language, even where most faulty, is weighty and massive, and indicates strong sense in every line. It often rises to an eloquence, not florid or impassioned, but high, grave, and sober; such as would become a state paper, or a judgment delivered by a great magistrate, a Somers[3] or a D'Aguesseau.[4]

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[1] A novel and a history can never really be occupied with the same matter. Imaginative writing, whether in prose or verse, is always and above all concerned with the individual, and everything else is only accessory. History concerns itself with the great organised masses of men known as peoples or states and treats of individuals only in relation to such masses and the effect produced upon them by uncommon personal qualities.

[2] See p. 100.

[3] John Somers, 1651-1716, Macaulay's favourite among the statesmen of the Revolution. He was called to the bar in 1676, was retained as junior counsel for the seven bishops in 1688, sat in the Convention Parliament in 1689, became Attorney-General in 1692, Lord Keeper in 1693, and Chancellor in 1697, and was created Baron Somers of Evesham in the same year. For his share in the partition treaties he was impeached in 1701, but acquitted. He was at the head of the Whig *junto* in the first years of Anne's reign. In 1708 he was appointed President of the Council. Dismissed with the other Whigs in 1710 he was too infirm to take an active part in politics when they returned to office under George I.

[4] Henri François d'Aguesseau, 1663-1751, was distinguished by his profound knowledge of law, his integrity and his literary accomplishments. He was Chancellor of France for many years.

In this respect the character of Mr. Hallam's mind corresponds strikingly with that of his style. His work is eminently judicial. Its whole spirit is that of the bench, not that of the bar. He sums up with a calm, steady impartiality, turning neither to the right nor to the left, glossing over nothing, exaggerating nothing, while the advocates on both sides are alternately biting their lips to hear their conflicting misstatements and sophisms exposed. On a general survey, we do not scruple to pronounce the Constitutional History the most impartial book that we ever read. We think it the more incumbent on us to bear this testimony strongly at first setting out, because, in the course of our remarks, we shall think it right to dwell principally on those parts of it from which we dissent.

There is one peculiarity about Mr. Hallam which, while it adds to the value of his writings, will, we fear, take away something from their popularity. He is less of a worshipper than any historian whom we can call to mind. Every political sect has its esoteric and its exoteric school, its abstract doctrines for the initiated, its visible symbols, its imposing forms, its mythological fables for the vulgar. It assists the devotion of those who are unable to raise themselves to the contemplation of pure truth by all the devices of Pagan or Papal superstition. It has its altars and its deified heroes, its relics and pilgrimages, its canonized martyrs and confessors, its festivals and its legendary miracles. Our pious ancestors, we are told, deserted the High Altar of Canterbury, to lay all their oblations on the shrine of St. Thomas. In the same manner the great and comfortable doctrines of the Tory creed, those particularly which relate to restrictions on worship and on trade, are adored by squires and rectors in Pitt Clubs, under the name of a minister who was as bad a representative of the system which has been christened after him as Becket of the spirit of the Gospel. On the other hand, the cause for which Hampden bled on the field and Sydney on the scaffold is enthusiastically toasted by many an honest radical who would be puzzled to explain the difference between Ship-money and the Habeas Corpus Act. It may be added that, as in religion, so in politics, few even of those who are enlightened enough to comprehend the meaning latent under the emblems of their faith can resist the contagion of the popular superstition. Often, when they flatter themselves that they are merely feigning a compliance with the prejudices of the vulgar, they are themselves under the influence of those very prejudices. It probably was not altogether on grounds of expediency that Socrates taught his followers to honour the gods whom the state honoured, and bequeathed a cock to Esculapius with his dying breath. So there is often a portion of willing credulity and enthusiasm in the veneration which the most discerning men pay to their political idols. From the very nature of man it must be so. The faculty by which we inseparably associate ideas which have often been presented to us in conjunction is not under the absolute control of the will. It may be quickened into morbid activity. It may be reasoned into sluggishness. But in a certain degree it will always exist. The almost absolute mastery which Mr. Hallam has obtained over feelings of this class is perfectly astonishing to us, and will, we believe, be not only astonishing but offensive to many of his readers. It must particularly disgust those people who, in their speculations on politics, are not reasoners but fanciers; whose opinions, even when sincere, are not produced, according to the ordinary law of intellectual births, by induction or inference, but are equivocally generated by the heat of fervid tempers out of the overflowing of tumid imaginations. A man of this class is always in extremes. He cannot be a friend to liberty without calling for a community of goods, or a friend to order without taking under his protection the foulest excesses of tyranny. His admiration oscillates between the most worthless of rebels and the most worthless of oppressors,[1] between Marten,[2] the disgrace of the High Court of Justice, and Laud,[3] the disgrace of the Star-Chamber. He can forgive any thing but temperance and impartiality. He has a certain sympathy with the violence of his opponents, as well as with that of his associates. In every furious partisan he sees either his present self or his former self, the pensioner that is, or the Jacobin that has been. But he is unable to comprehend a writer who, steadily attached to principles, is indifferent about names and badges, and who judges of characters with equable severity, not altogether untinctured with cynicism, but free from the slightest touch of passion, party spirit, or caprice.[1]

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[1] An allusion to Southey who, in his youthful ardour of republicanism, wrote a poem in honour of Marten, and in later days championed the Church against Romanists and Dissenters.

[2] Henry Marten, 1602-1680, was elected to the Long Parliament in 1640. A republican and a freethinker he was the determined enemy of Charles and afterwards of Cromwell. For his part in the King's trial he was imprisoned from the Restoration until his death. He had a name for loose living which may have been aggravated by the circumstance that he was an avowed freethinker in an age of theologians. Carlyle termed him "a right hard-headed stout-hearted little man, full of sharp fire and cheerful light; sworn foe of cant in all its figures; an indomitable little Roman pagan, if no better" (*Cromwell's Letters and Speeches*, part vii.).

[3] William Laud, 1573-1645, became President of St. John's College, Oxford, in 1611, Dean of Gloucester in 1616, Bishop of St. David's in 1621, of London in 1628, Archbishop of Canterbury in 1633, and as the chief of the rising Anglo-Catholic party in the Church and trusted adviser of Charles I. in the exercise of his royal supremacy exerted an immense influence and provoked the fiercest indignation among the Puritans. The failing of intolerance he shared with his age and with his opponents. But Macaulay, who regarded this period of English history in a peculiarly partisan spirit, uniformly wrote of Laud's personal character with a loathing, and of his abilities with a contempt, unbecoming the gravity of a historian. There is no reason beyond the necessity of antithesis for singling out Laud as the disgrace of the Star-Chamber.

We should probably like Mr. Hallam's book more if, instead of pointing out with strict fidelity the bright points and the dark spots of both parties, he had exerted himself to whitewash the one and to blacken the other. But we should certainly prize it far less. Eulogy and invective may be had for the asking. But for cold rigid justice, the one weight and the one measure, we know not where else we can look.

No portion of our annals has been more perplexed and misrepresented by writers of different parties than the history of the Reformation. In this labyrinth of falsehood and sophistry, the guidance of Mr. Hallam is peculiarly valuable. It is impossible not to admire the even-handed justice with which he deals out castigation to right and left on the rival persecutors.

It is vehemently maintained by some writers of the present day that Elizabeth persecuted neither Papists nor Puritans as such, and that the severe measures which she occasionally adopted were dictated, not by religious intolerance, but by political necessity. Even the excellent account of those times which Mr. Hallam has given has not altogether imposed silence on the authors of this fallacy. The title of the Queen, they say, was annulled by the Pope; her throne was given to another; her subjects were incited to rebellion; her life was menaced; every Catholic was bound in conscience to be a traitor; it was therefore against traitors, not against Catholics, that the penal laws were enacted.

In order that our readers may be fully competent to appreciate the merits of this defence, we will state, as concisely as possible, the substance of some of these laws.

As soon as Elizabeth ascended the throne, and before the least hostility to her government had been shown by the Catholic population, an act passed prohibiting the celebration of the rites of the Romish Church on pain of forfeiture for the first offence, of a year's imprisonment for the second, and of perpetual imprisonment for the third.[1]

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[1] Hallam's integrity is worthy of the highest praise, but it can hardly be said that a history so much pervaded as his by Whig principles is free from the slightest touch of party spirit.

A law was next made in 1562, enacting, that all who had ever graduated at the Universities or received holy orders, all lawyers, and all magistrates, should take the oath of supremacy when tendered to them, on pain of forfeiture and imprisonment during the royal pleasure. After the lapse of three months, the oath might again be tendered to them; and, if it were again refused, the recusant was guilty of high treason.[2] A prospective law, however severe, framed to exclude Catholics from the liberal professions, would have been mercy itself compared with this odious act. It is a retrospective statute; it is a retrospective penal statute; it is a retrospective penal statute against a large class. We will not positively affirm that a law of this description must always, and under all circumstances, be unjustifiable. But the presumption against it is most violent; nor do we remember any crisis, either in our own history, or in the history of any other country, which would have rendered such a provision necessary. In the present case, what circumstances called for extraordinary rigour? There might be disaffection among the Catholics. The prohibition of their worship would naturally produce it. But it is from their situation, not from their conduct, from the wrongs which they had suffered, not from those which they had committed, that the existence of discontent among them must be inferred. There were libels, no doubt, and prophecies, and rumours, and suspicions, strange grounds for a law inflicting capital penalties, *ex post facto*, on a large body of men.

Eight years later, the bull of Pius deposing Elizabeth produced a third law.[3] This law, to which alone, as we conceive, the defence now under our consideration can apply, provides that, if any Catholic shall convert a Protestant to the Romish Church, they shall both suffer death as for high treason.

We believe that we might safely content ourselves with stating the fact, and leaving it to the judgment of every plain Englishman. Recent controversies have, however, given so much importance to this subject, that we will offer a few remarks on it.

In the first place, the arguments which are urged in favour of

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[1] The Act of Uniformity, 1 Eliz., ch. ii.

[2] The Act for the Assurance of the Queen's Royal Power over all Estates and Subjects within Her Dominions, 5 Eliz., ch. i.

[3] The Act for the Queen's Security, 13 Eliz., ch. ii.

Elizabeth apply with much greater force to the case of her sister Mary. The Catholics did not, at the time of Elizabeth's accession, rise in arms to seat a Pretender on her throne. But before Mary had given, or could give, provocation, the most distinguished Protestants attempted to set aside her rights in favour of the Lady Jane.[1] That attempt, and the subsequent insurrection of Wyatt,[2] furnished at least as good a plea for the burning of Protestants, as the conspiracies against Elizabeth furnish for the hanging and embowelling of Papists.

The fact is that both pleas are worthless alike. If such arguments are to pass current, it will be easy to prove that there was never such a thing as religious persecution since the creation. For there never was a religious persecution in which some odious crime was not, justly or unjustly, said to be obviously deducible from the doctrines of the persecuted party. We might say, that the Cæsars did not persecute the Christians; that they only punished men who were charged, rightly or wrongly, with burning Rome, and with committing the foulest abominations in secret assemblies; and that the refusal to throw frankincense on the altar of Jupiter was not the crime, but only evidence of the crime. We might say, that the massacre of St. Bartholomew was intended to extirpate, not a religious sect, but a political party. For, beyond all doubt, the proceedings of the Huguenots, from the conspiracy of Amboise[3] to the battle of Moncontour,[4] had given much more trouble to the French monarchy than the Catholics have ever given to the English monarchy since the Reformation; and that too with much less excuse.

The true distinction is perfectly obvious. To punish a man because he has committed a crime, or because he is believed, though unjustly, to have committed a crime, is not persecution.

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[1] When the Duke of Northumberland and his supporters induced Edward VI. to make a will which purported to exclude his sisters from the succession in favour of Lady Jane Grey, daughter of the Duke of Suffolk and great-granddaughter of Henry VII.

[2] Sir Thomas Wyatt, 1521 (?)-1554, raised an insurrection in Kent in protest against the contemplated marriage between Queen Mary and Philip II. of Spain. He gained some success at first and reached London, but had to surrender and was executed along with many of his followers.

[3] A plot formed in 1559 by a number of the leading Huguenots to seize the young King Francis II. and to obtain possession of the government. It was discovered before anything had been done to carry it into effect, and many suffered death.

[4] The battle of Moncontour (on the borders of Anjou and Poitou) was fought on the 3rd of October, 1569, between the Catholic army under Henry, Duke of Anjou, and the Huguenots under Coligny. The Huguenots were defeated with great slaughter.

To punish a man, because we infer from the nature of some doctrine which he holds, or from the conduct of other persons who hold the same doctrines with him, that he will commit a crime, is persecution, and is, in every case, foolish and wicked.

When Elizabeth put Ballard and Babington[1] to death, she was not persecuting. Nor should we have accused her government of persecution for passing any law, however severe, against overt acts of sedition. But to argue that, because a man is a Catholic, he must think it right to murder a heretical sovereign, and that because he thinks it right he will attempt to do it, and then, to found on this conclusion a law for punishing him as if he had done it, is plain persecution.

If, indeed, all men reasoned in the same manner on the same data, and always did what they thought it their duty to do, this mode of dispensing punishment might be extremely judicious. But as people who agree about premises often disagree about conclusions, and as no man in the world acts up to his own standard of right, there are two enormous gaps in the logic by which alone penalties for opinions can be defended. The doctrine of reprobation, in the judgment of many very able men, follows by syllogistic necessity from the doctrine of election.[2] Others conceive that the Antinomian heresy[3] directly follows from the doctrine of reprobation; and it is very generally thought that licentiousness and cruelty of the worst description are likely to be the fruits, as they often have been the fruits, of Antinomian opinions. This chain of reasoning, we think, is as perfect in all its parts as that which makes out a Papist to be necessarily a traitor. Yet it would be rather a strong measure to hang all the Calvinists, on the ground that, if they were spared, they would infallibly commit all the atrocities of Matthias and Knipperdoling.[4] For, reason the matter as we may, experience shows us that a man may believe in election without believing in reprobation, that he may believe in reprobation without being an Antinomian, and that he may be an Antinomian without being a bad citizen. Man, in short, is so inconsistent a creature that it is impossible to reason from his belief to his conduct, or from one part of his belief to another.

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[1] Anthony Babington, 1561-1586, was the ringleader of the last plot to assassinate Elizabeth and release Mary, and John Ballard, a priest, was one of his accomplices.

[2] The doctrine of election, namely that certain human beings are predestined from all eternity to salvation irrespective of anything that they can do, seems to imply the doctrine of reprobation, namely that all other human beings are predestined from all eternity to perdition.

[3] The heresy that the moral law is not binding upon the devout Christian.

[4] Matthias and Knipperdoling were leaders of the fanatical Anabaptists who in 1534 seized the city of Munster in Westphalia, established a kingdom of the saints based on the equality of all Christians and community of women and of goods, and committed the wildest extravagances until the city was taken in the following year, when they and their followers perished.

We do not believe that every Englishman who was reconciled to the Catholic Church would, as a necessary consequence, have thought himself justified in deposing or assassinating Elizabeth. It is not sufficient to say that the convert must have acknowledged the authority of the Pope, and that the Pope had issued a bull against the Queen. We know through what strange loopholes the human mind contrives to escape, when it wishes to avoid a disagreeable inference from an admitted proposition. We know how long the Jansenists[1] contrived to believe the Pope infallible in matters of doctrine, and at the same time to believe doctrines which he pronounced to be heretical. Let it pass, however, that every Catholic in the kingdom thought that Elizabeth might be lawfully murdered. Still the old maxim, that what is the business of everybody is the business of nobody, is particularly likely to hold good in a case in which a cruel death is the almost inevitable consequence of making any attempt.

Of the ten thousand clergymen of the Church of England, there is scarcely one who would not say that a man who should leave his country and friends to preach the Gospel among savages, and who should, after labouring indefatigably without any hope of reward, terminate his life by martyrdom, would deserve the warmest admiration. Yet we doubt whether ten of the ten thousand ever thought of going on such an expedition. Why should we suppose that conscientious motives, feeble as they are constantly found to be in a good cause, should be omnipotent for evil? Doubtless there was many a jolly Popish priest in the old manor-houses of the northern counties, who would have admitted, in theory, the deposing power of the Pope, but who would not have been ambitious to be stretched on the rack, even though it were to be used, according to the benevolent proviso of Lord Burleigh, "as charitably as such a thing can be,"[1] or to be hanged, drawn, and quartered, even though, by that rare indulgence which the Queen, of her special grace, certain knowledge, and mere motion, sometimes extended to very mitigated cases, he were allowed a fair time to choke before the hangman began to grabble in his entrails.

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[1] The disciples of Cornelius Jansen, 1585-1638, Bishop of Ypres in 1635, who held views regarding the operation of Divine grace on the human soul at variance with those entertained by the Jesuits, then the most influential theologians and moralists in the Roman Church. In 1653 Pope Innocent X., by his bull "Cum suasissem," condemned five propositions drawn, as he declared, from the writings of Jansenius. The Jansenists admitted that the propositions thus condemned were contrary to the faith, but denied that they represented the meaning of their teacher. The controversy was protracted until the French Revolution opened a new chapter of Church history.

But the laws passed against the Puritans had not even the wretched excuse which we have been considering. In this case, the cruelty was equal, the danger infinitely less. In fact, the danger was created solely by the cruelty. But it is superfluous to press the argument. By no artifice of ingenuity can the stigma of persecution, the worst blemish of the English Church, be effaced or patched over. Her doctrines, we well know, do not tend to intolerance. She admits the possibility of salvation out of her own pale. But this circumstance, in itself honourable to her, aggravates the sin and the shame of those who persecuted in her name. Dominic and De Montfort[2] did not, at least, murder and torture for differences of opinion which they considered as trifling. It was to stop an infection which, as they believed, hurried to certain perdition every soul which it seized, that they employed their fire and steel. The measures of the English government with respect to the Papists and Puritans sprang from a widely different principle. If those who deny that the founders of the Church were guilty of religious persecution mean only that the founders of the Church were not influenced by any religious motive, we perfectly agree with them. Neither the penal code of Elizabeth, nor the more hateful system by which Charles the Second attempted to force Episcopacy on the Scotch, had an origin so noble. The cause is to be sought in some circumstances which attended the Reformation in England, circumstances of which the effects long continued to be felt, and may in some degree be traced even at the present day.

In Germany, in France, in Switzerland, and in Scotland, the contest against the Papal power was essentially a religious contest. In all those countries, indeed, the cause of the Reformation, like every other great cause, attracted to itself many supporters influenced by no conscientious principle, many who quitted the Established Church only because they thought her in danger, many who were weary of her restraints, and many who were greedy for her spoils. But it was not by these adherents that the separation was there conducted. They were welcome auxiliaries; their support was too often purchased by unworthy compliances; but, however exalted in rank or power, they were not the leaders in the enterprise. Men of a widely different description, men who redeemed great infirmities and errors by sincerity, disinterestedness, energy, and courage, men who, with many of the vices of revolutionary chiefs and of polemic divines, united some of the highest qualities of apostles, were the real directors. They might be violent in innovation and scurrilous in controversy. They might sometimes act with inexcusable severity towards opponents, and sometimes connive disreputably at the vices of powerful allies. But fear was not in them, nor hypocrisy, nor avarice, nor any petty selfishness. Their one great object was the demolition of the idols and the purification of the sanctuary. If they were too indulgent to the failings of eminent men from whose patronage they expected advantage to the church, they never flinched before persecuting tyrants and hostile armies. For that theological system to which they sacrificed the lives of others without scruple, they were ready to throw away their own lives without fear. Such were the authors of the great schism on the Continent and in the northern part of this island. The Elector of Saxony[1] and the Landgrave of Hesse,[2] the Prince of Condé[3] and the King of Navarre,[4] the Earl of Moray[5] and the Earl of Morton,[6] might espouse the Protestant opinions, or might pretend to espouse them; but it was from Luther, from Calvin, from Knox, that the Reformation took its character.

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[1] "In as charitable manner as such a thing might be." This quaint phrase occurs in Burleigh's *Declaration of the favourable dealings of her Majesty's Commissioners appointed for the examination of certain traitors and of tortures unjustly reported to be done upon them for matters of religion*, published in 1583.

[2] See p. 52.

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[1] From the beginning of the Lutheran movement the Electors of Saxony were foremost among the German princes favourable to the Reformation. But Macaulay probably refers to John Frederick who became elector in 1532, was head of the Protestant League of Smalkalde, and, being defeated and captured by Charles V. at the battle of Muhlberg in 1547, was imprisoned for some years and forced to resign his electorate. He died in 1554.

[2] Philip, Landgrave of Hesse, 1504-1567, declared for Luther in 1526, joined the League of Smalkalde and was taken prisoner by Charles V. at the battle of Muhlberg. He had caused some scandal by obtaining a decision from a number of Lutheran divines authorising him to marry a second wife without having been divorced from the first.

[3] Louis of Bourbon, Prince of Condé, 1530-1569, a leader of the Huguenots, taken prisoner at the battle of Jarnac and murdered in cold blood.

[4] The King of Navarre meant by Macaulay may have been either Antony of Bourbon, 1518-1562, elder brother of Condé and consort of Jeanne d'Albret, Queen of Navarre, who was regarded as their chief by the Huguenots, but apostatised in 1561; or his son and heir Henry, afterwards Henry IV. of France, who apostatised in 1572 and again in 1593, and was not supposed to be fervent in any persuasion.

[5] James, Earl of Moray, 1531 (?)-1570, a natural son of James V. of Scotland, was conspicuous among the Protestant lords who resisted the Catholic regent, Mary of Guise, and with Elizabeth's aid expelled the French troops from the kingdom. When Queen Mary was deposed in 1567 Moray became regent for her infant son James, and in 1568 he defeated her army at Langside. He was murdered by Hamilton of Bothwellhaugh in 1570. There does not appear to be any reason for doubting that he was a sincere Protestant.

[6] James Douglas, fourth Earl of Morton (date of birth uncertain), d. in 1581, succeeded to his earldom in 1553 and took the Protestant side, although not very

England has no such names to show; not that she wanted men of sincere piety, of deep learning, of steady and adventurous courage. But these were thrown into the back ground. Elsewhere men of this character were the principals. Here they acted a secondary part. Elsewhere worldliness was the tool of zeal. Here zeal was the tool of worldliness. A King, whose character may be best described by saying that he was despotism itself personified, unprincipled ministers, a rapacious aristocracy, a servile Parliament, such were the instruments by which England was delivered from the yoke of Rome. The work which had been begun by Henry, the murderer of his wives, was continued by Somerset, the murderer of his brother, and completed by Elizabeth, the murderer of her guest.[1] Sprung from brutal passion, nurtured by selfish policy, the Reformation in England displayed little of what had, in other countries, distinguished it, unflinching and unsparing devotion, boldness of speech, and singleness of eye. These were indeed to be found; but it was in the lower ranks of the party which opposed the authority of Rome, in such men as Hooper,[2] Latimer,[3] Rogers,[4] and Taylor.[5]

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warmly. He took part in the plot to murder Rizzio and knew of the plot to murder Darnley. He became Regent of Scotland in 1572 after the death of the Earl of Mar. He resigned the regency in 1578, but being hard pressed by his enemies entered into treasonable communications with Elizabeth and was finally condemned and executed on the false charge of having been an accomplice in Darnley's death.

[1] This passage is a capital instance of Macaulay's rhetoric at its worst. It expresses a partial truth in language so coarse and indiscriminate as to convey an impression almost entirely false. When Macaulay framed the sentence about the three murderers he thought only of vexing the gentlemen who wrote for the *Quarterly Review.*

[2] John Hooper (date of birth uncertain), d. in 1555, in youth a Cistercian, afterwards a zealous and austere Protestant, was appointed chaplain to the Protector, Somerset, in 1549, and nominated to the See of Gloucester in 1550. He was burnt at Gloucester in the Marian persecution.

[3] Hugh Latimer, 1485 (?)-1555, the most earnest and powerful of the early Protestant preachers, became Bishop of Worcester in 1535, but resigned in 1539 after the passing of the statute of the Six Articles. Under Edward VI. he was again in favour. He was burnt at Oxford.

[4] John Rogers, 1500 (?)-1555, was converted to Protestant opinions by William Tindal, and after his execution prepared his translation of the Bible for the press. In 1550 he was presented to the rectory of St. Margaret Moyses and the vicarage of St. Sepulchre's, London, and the next year became a prebendary of St. Paul's. He was a bold, outspoken preacher and the first to suffer martyrdom under Mary.

[5] Rowland Taylor (date of birth unknown), d. in 1555, became rector of Hadleigh, Suffolk, and gained much honour as a parish priest and an eloquent preacher. He also suffered martyrdom.

Of those who had any important share in bringing the Reformation about, Ridley was perhaps the only person who did not consider it as a mere political job. Even Ridley did not play a very prominent part. Among the statesmen and prelates who principally gave the tone to the religious changes, there is one, and one only, whose conduct partiality itself can attribute to any other than interested motives. It is not strange, therefore, that his character should have been the subject of fierce controversy. We need not say that we speak of Cranmer.[1]

Mr. Hallam has been severely censured for saying with his usual placid severity, that, "if we weigh the character of this prelate in an equal balance, he will appear far indeed removed from the turpitude imputed to him by his enemies; yet not entitled to any extraordinary veneration." [2] We will venture to expand the sense of Mr. Hallam, and to comment on it thus:—If we consider Cranmer merely as a statesman, he will not appear a much worse man than Wolsey, Gardiner, Cromwell, or Somerset. But, when an attempt is made to set him up as a saint, it is scarcely possible for any man of sense who knows the history of the times to preserve his gravity. If the memory of the archbishop had been left to find its own place, he would have soon been lost among the crowd which is mingled

> "A quel cattivo coro
> Degli angeli, che non furon ribelli,
> Nè fur fedeli a Dio, ma per se foro." [3]

And the only notice which it would have been necessary to take of his name would have been

> "Non ragioniam di lui; ma guarda, e passa." [4]

But, since his admirers challenge for him a place in the noble army of martyrs, his claims require fuller discussion.

The origin of his greatness, common enough in the scandalous chronicles of courts, seems strangely out of place in a hagiology. Cranmer rose into favour by serving Henry in the disgraceful affair of his first divorce. He promoted the marriage of Anne Boleyn with the King. On a frivolous pretence he pronounced that marriage null and void. On a pretence, if possible, still more frivolous, he dissolved the ties which bound the shameless tyrant to Anne of Cleves. He attached himself to Cromwell while the fortunes of Cromwell flourished. He voted for cutting off Cromwell's head without a trial, when the tide of royal favour turned. He conformed backwards and forwards as the King changed his mind. He assisted, while Henry lived, in condemning to the flames those who denied the doctrine of transubstantiation. He found out, as soon as Henry was dead, that the doctrine was false. He was, however, not at a loss for people to burn. The authority of his station and of his grey hairs was employed to overcome the disgust with which an intelligent and virtuous child regarded persecution.[1] Intolerance is always bad. But the sanguinary intolerance of a man who thus wavered in his creed excites a loathing, to which it is difficult to give vent without calling foul names. Equally false to political and to religious obligations, the primate was first the tool of Somerset, and then the tool of Northumberland. When the Protector wished to put his own brother to death, without even the semblance of a trial, he found a ready instrument in Cranmer. In spite of the canon law, which forbade a churchman to take any part in matters of blood, the archbishop signed the warrant for the atrocious sentence. When Somerset had been in his turn destroyed, his destroyer received the support of Cranmer in a wicked attempt to change the course of the succession.

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[1] Thomas Cranmer, 1489-1556, first rose to eminence by suggesting that, since the Pope evaded Henry's demand for a divorce from Catharine of Arragon, the King would do well to consult the universities of Christendom, and, if they held his marriage unlawful, to proceed without waiting for the Papal sanction. He was then employed in diplomacy. In 1533 he became Archbishop of Canterbury. Most of the counts in Macaulay's indictment of his subsequent behaviour are true. He was undoubtedly a timid and supple man. But he is entitled to such mitigation of judgment as conformity, not with the vices, but with the general standard of his age demands. That Cranmer was naturally humane is shown by his endeavours, although feeble, to save More, Fisher, the Carthusian monks and Cromwell himself.

[2] *Constitutional History*, ch. ii.

[3] "With that caitiff band of angels who were not rebels nor yet faithful to God, but were for themselves" (*Divina Commedia*, *Inferno*, canto 3, lines 37-39).

[4] "Let us not speak of him, but look and pass" (*Ibid.*).

The apology made for him by his admirers only renders his conduct more contemptible. He complied, it is said, against his better judgment, because he could not resist the entreaties of Edward. A holy prelate of sixty, one would think, might be better employed by the bedside of a dying child, than in committing crimes at the request of the young disciple. If Cranmer had shown half as much firmness when Edward requested him to commit treason as he had before shown when

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[1] This remark refers to the story that Edward VI. wished to spare Joan Bocher, but was persuaded by Cranmer to approve of her execution. The story is now discredited. The same charge is implied below where Macaulay says that "Edward requested him not to commit murder," and that "Edward had been forced into persecution."

Edward requested him not to commit murder, he might have saved the country from one of the greatest misfortunes that it ever underwent. He became, from whatever motive, the accomplice of the worthless Dudley.[1] The virtuous scruples of another young and amiable mind were to be overcome. As Edward had been forced into persecution, Jane was to be seduced into treason. No transaction in our annals is more unjustifiable than this. If a hereditary title were to be respected, Mary possessed it. If a parliamentary title were preferable, Mary possessed that also. If the interest of the Protestant religion required a departure from the ordinary rule of succession, that interest would have been best served by raising Elizabeth to the throne. If the foreign relations of the kingdom were considered, still stronger reasons might be found for preferring Elizabeth to Jane. There was great doubt whether Jane or the Queen of Scotland had the better claim; and that doubt would, in all probability, have produced a war both with Scotland and with France, if the project of Northumberland had not been blasted in its infancy. That Elizabeth had a better claim than the Queen of Scotland was indisputable. To the part which Cranmer, and unfortunately some better men than Cranmer, took in this most reprehensible scheme, much of the severity with which the Protestants were afterwards treated must in fairness be ascribed.

The plot failed; Popery triumphed; and Cranmer recanted. Most people look on his recantation as a single blemish on an honourable life, the frailty of an unguarded moment. But, in fact, his recantation was in strict accordance with the system on which he had constantly acted. It was part of a regular habit. It was not the first recantation that he had made; and, in all probability, if it had answered its purpose, it would not have been the last. We do not blame him for not choosing to be burned alive. It is no very severe reproach to any person that he does not possess heroic fortitude. But surely a man who liked the fire so little should have had some sympathy for others. A persecutor who inflicts nothing which he is not ready to endure deserves some respect. But when a man who loves his doctrines more than the lives of his neighbours, loves his own little finger better than his doctrines, a very simple argument *à fortiori* will enable us to estimate the amount of his benevolence.

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[1] John Dudley, 1502-1553, created Viscount Lisle in 1542, Earl of Warwick in 1547 and Duke of Northumberland in 1551. He was a member of the Council of Regency appointed by the will of Henry VIII., and after Somerset's fall in 1549 became the real head of the Government. Having married a son to Lady Jane Grey he sought to make her Queen upon Edward's death. But finding no support he was taken prisoner, condemned and executed as a traitor. He was a brave and able soldier, but a weak, unprincipled statesman.

But his martyrdom, it is said, redeemed every thing. It is extraordinary that so much ignorance should exist on this subject. The fact is that, if a martyr be a man who chooses to die rather than to renounce his opinions, Cranmer was no more a martyr than Dr. Dodd.[1] He died, solely because he could not help it. He never retracted his recantation till he found he had made it in vain. The Queen was fully resolved that, Catholic or Protestant, he should burn. Then he spoke out, as people generally speak out when they are at the point of death and have nothing to hope or to fear on earth. If Mary had suffered him to live, we suspect that he would have heard mass and received absolution, like a good Catholic, till the accession of Elizabeth, and that he would then have purchased, by another apostasy, the power of burning men better and braver than himself.

We do not mean, however, to represent him as a monster of wickedness. He was not wantonly cruel or treacherous. He was merely a supple, timid, interested courtier, in times of frequent and violent change. That which has always been represented as his distinguishing virtue, the facility with which he forgave his enemies, belongs to the character. Slaves of his class are never vindictive, and never grateful. A present interest effaces past services and past injuries from their minds together. Their only object is self-preservation ; and for this they conciliate those who wrong them, just as they abandon those who serve them. Before we extol a man for his forgiving temper, we should inquire whether he is above revenge, or below it.

Somerset had as little principle as his coadjutor.[2] Of Henry, an orthodox Catholic, except that he chose to be his own Pope, and of Elizabeth, who certainly had no objection to the theology of Rome, we need say nothing.[3] These four persons were the great authors of the English Reformation. Three of them had a direct interest in the extension of the royal prerogative. The fourth was the ready tool of any who could frighten him. It is not difficult to see from what motives, and on what plan, such persons would be inclined to remodel the Church. The scheme was merely to transfer the full cup of sorceries from the Babylonian enchantress to other hands, spilling as little as possible by the way. The Catholic doctrines and rites were to be retained in the Church of England. But the King was to exercise the control which had formerly belonged to the Roman Pontiff. In this Henry for a time succeeded. The extraordinary force of his character, the fortunate situation in which he stood with respect to foreign powers, and the vast resources which the suppression of the monasteries placed at his disposal, enabled him to oppress both the religious factions equally. He punished with impartial severity those who renounced the doctrines of Rome, and those who acknowledged her jurisdiction. The basis, however, on which he attempted to establish his power was too narrow to be durable. It would have been impossible even for him long to persecute both persuasions. Even under his reign there had been insurrections on the part of the Catholics, and signs of a spirit which was likely soon to produce insurrection on the part of the Protestants. It was plainly necessary, therefore, that the Crown should form an alliance with one or with the other side. To recognise the Papal supremacy, would have been to abandon the whole design. Reluctantly and sullenly the government at last joined the Protestants. In forming this junction, its object was to procure as much aid as possible for its selfish undertaking, and to make the smallest possible concessions to the spirit of religious innovation.[1]

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[1] William Dodd, 1729-1777, a clergyman of some note as a preacher and a writer of edifying books, but a careless liver who was convicted of forgery and executed in spite of extraordinary efforts to obtain a pardon. His case is now remembered chiefly because of the interest taken in it by Johnson.

[2] Somerset was probably a sincere Protestant.

[3] Macaulay lays too exclusive a stress upon the personal action of Henry and Elizabeth, forgetting that their course was traced for them by the circumstances of their kingdom. In their attack upon Papal authority they were only carrying to its extreme and logical conclusion the contest which had been waged so long between the Holy See and the Crown and Parliament of England, whilst in retaining so much of Catholic doctrine and ritual they were, as Macaulay elsewhere admits, giving

From this compromise the Church of England sprang. In many respects, indeed, it has been well for her that, in an age of exuberant zeal, her principal founders were mere politicians. To this circumstance she owes her moderate articles, her decent ceremonies, her noble and pathetic liturgy. Her worship is not disfigured by mummery. Yet she has preserved, in a far greater degree than any of her Protestant sisters, that art of striking

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effect to the wishes of a majority of their subjects. They may not have done the best thing, they certainly did not do it in the best way, but equity demands that their action should be judged with constant reference to the conditions under which they reigned.

[1] The Government of Edward VI. might more justly be blamed for innovating with too much haste and violence.

the senses and filling the imagination in which the Catholic Church so eminently excels. But, on the other hand, she continued to be, for more than a hundred and fifty years, the servile handmaid of monarchy, the steady enemy of public liberty. The divine right of kings, and the duty of passively obeying all their commands, were her favourite tenets. She held those tenets firmly through times of oppression, persecution, and licentiousness; while law was trampled down; while judgment was perverted; while the people were eaten as though they were bread. Once, and but once, for a moment, and but for a moment, when her own dignity and property were touched, she forgot to practise the submission which she had taught.

Elizabeth clearly discerned the advantages which were to be derived from a close connection between the monarchy and the priesthood. At the time of her accession, indeed, she evidently meditated a partial reconciliation with Rome; and, throughout her whole life, she leaned strongly to some of the most obnoxious parts of the Catholic system. But her imperious temper, her keen sagacity, and her peculiar situation, soon led her to attach herself completely to a church which was all her own. On the same principle on which she joined it, she attempted to drive all her people within its pale by persecution. She supported it by severe penal laws, not because she thought conformity to its discipline necessary to salvation; but because it was the fastness which arbitrary power was making strong for itself; because she expected a more profound obedience from those who saw in her both their civil and their ecclesiastical chief, than from those who, like the Papists, ascribed spiritual authority to the Pope, or from those who, like some of the Puritans, ascribed it only to Heaven. To dissent from her establishment was to dissent from an institution founded with an express view to the maintenance and extension of the royal prerogative.[1]

This great Queen and her successors, by considering conformity and loyalty as identical, at length made them so. With respect to the Catholics, indeed, the rigour of persecution abated after her death. James soon found that they were unable to injure him, and that the animosity which the Puritan party felt towards them drove them of necessity to take refuge under his throne. During the subsequent conflict, their fault was any thing but disloyalty. On the other hand, James hated the Puritans with more than the hatred of Elizabeth. Her aversion to them was political; his was personal. The sect had plagued him in Scotland, where he was weak; and he was determined to be even with them in England, where he was powerful. Persecution gradually changed a sect into a faction. That there was any thing in the religious opinions of the Puritans which rendered them hostile to monarchy has never been proved to our satisfaction. After our civil contests, it became the fashion to say that Presbyterianism was connected with Republicanism; just as it has been the fashion to say, since the time of the French Revolution, that Infidelity is connected with Republicanism. It is perfectly true that a church, constituted on the Calvinistic model, will not strengthen the hands of the sovereign so much as a hierarchy which consists of several ranks, differing in dignity and emolument, and of which all the members are constantly looking to the Government for promotion. But experience has clearly shown that a Calvinistic church, like every other church, is disaffected when it is persecuted, quiet when it is tolerated, and actively loyal when it is favoured and cherished. Scotland has had a Presbyterian establishment during a century and a half. Yet her General Assembly has not, during that period, given half so much trouble to the government as the Convocation of the Church of England gave during the thirty years which followed the Revolution. That James and Charles should have been mistaken in this point is not surprising. But we are astonished, we must confess, that men of our own time, men who have before them the proof of what toleration can effect, men who may see with their own eyes that the Presbyterians are no such monsters when government is wise enough to let them alone, should defend the persecutions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as indispensable to the safety of the church and the throne.

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[1] In an age when all rulers considered it their duty to enforce religious uniformity a ruler like Elizabeth, imperious though not devout, very naturally acted on the recognised principle. Prudence as well as her personal taste led her to adopt a compromise between the Romanists and the Reformers. It is unnecessary then to suppose that she planned her Church settlement simply as a means to the absolute power of the Crown.

How persecution protects churches and thrones was soon made manifest. A systematic political opposition, vehement, daring, and inflexible, sprang from a schism about trifles, altogether unconnected with the real interests of religion or of the state. Before the close of the reign of Elizabeth this opposition began to show itself. It broke forth on the question of the monopolies. Even the imperial Lioness was compelled to abandon her prey, and slowly and fiercely to recede before the assailants.[1] The spirit of liberty grew with the growing wealth and intelligence of the people. The feeble struggles and insults of James irritated instead of suppressing it; and the events which immediately followed the accession of his son portended a contest of no common severity, between a king resolved to be absolute, and a people resolved to be free.

The famous proceedings of the third Parliament of Charles, and the tyrannical measures which followed its dissolution, are extremely well described by Mr. Hallam. No writer, we think, has shown, in so clear and satisfactory a manner, that the Government then entertained a fixed purpose of destroying the old parliamentary constitution of England, or at least of reducing it to a mere shadow. We hasten, however, to a part of his work which, though it abounds in valuable information and in remarks well deserving to be attentively considered, and though it is, like the rest, evidently written in a spirit of perfect impartiality, appears to us, in many points, objectionable.

We pass to the year 1640. The fate of the short Parliament held in that year clearly indicated the views of the King. That a Parliament so moderate in feeling should have met after so many years of oppression is truly wonderful. Hyde extols its loyal and conciliatory spirit. Its conduct, we are told, made the excellent Falkland in love with the very name of Parliament. We think, indeed, with Oliver St. John,[2] that its moderation was carried too far, and that the times required sharper and more decided councils. It was fortunate, however, that the King had another opportunity of showing that hatred of the liberties of his subjects which was the ruling principle of all his conduct. The sole crime of the Commons was that, meeting after a long intermission of parliaments, and after a long series of cruelties and illegal imposts, they seemed inclined to examine grievances before they would vote supplies. For this insolence they were dissolved almost as soon as they met.[3]

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[1] A singular instance of the dangers of a rhetorical style. Elizabeth's concession to her last Parliament in the affair of the monopolies was made, as Macaulay notes elsewhere (Essay on Burleigh), with grace and cordiality and received with effusive thankfulness.

[2] Oliver St. John, a member of this Parliament, said when the dissolution was announced that all was well and that things must be worse before they would be better (Clarendon, ii., 78). For St. John's subsequent career see p. 423.

[3] Professor Gardiner lays part of the blame for this dissolution upon Sir Henry Vane, the elder, who, when the majority of the Commons were willing to make an immediate grant, told the House that the King must have a great sum and told the

Defeat, universal agitation, financial embarrassments, disorganization in every part of the government, compelled Charles again to convene the Houses before the close of the same year. Their meeting was one of the great eras in the history of the civilised world. Whatever of political freedom exists either in Europe or in America, has sprung, directly or indirectly, from those institutions which they secured and reformed.[1] We never turn to the annals of those times without feeling increased admiration of the patriotism, the energy, the decision, the consummate wisdom, which marked the measures of that great Parliament, from the day on which it met to the commencement of civil hostilities.

The impeachment of Strafford was the first, and perhaps the greatest blow. The whole conduct of that celebrated man proved that he had formed a deliberate scheme to subvert the fundamental laws of England. Those parts of his correspondence which have been brought to light since his death place the matter beyond a doubt. One of his admirers has, indeed, offered to show "that the passages which Mr. Hallam has invidiously extracted from the correspondence between Laud and Strafford, as proving their design to introduce a thorough tyranny, refer not to any such design, but to a thorough reform in the affairs of state, and the thorough maintenance of just authority." We will recommend two or three of these passages to the especial notice of our readers.

All who know any thing of those times, know that the conduct of Hampden in the affair of the ship-money met with the warm approbation of every respectable Royalist in England. It drew forth the ardent eulogies of the champions of the prerogative and even of the Crown lawyers themselves. Clarendon allows Hampden's demeanour through the whole proceeding to have been such, that even those who watched for an occasion against the defender of the people, were compelled to acknowledge themselves unable to find any fault in him. That he was right in the point of law is now universally admitted. Even had it been otherwise, he had a fair case. Five of the Judges, servile as our Courts then were, pronounced in his favour. The

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King that the House would grant nothing. At a meeting of members of the Commons it was agreed to petition the King that he would make terms with the Scots, and information of this coming to the King made him decide upon immediate dissolution.

[1] It is unjust thus to ignore the service rendered by the Dutch Republic and the Helvetian Commonwealths in keeping alive the idea of freedom.

majority against him was the smallest possible. In no country retaining the slightest vestige of constitutional liberty can a modest and decent appeal to the laws be treated as a crime. Strafford, however, recommends that, for taking the sense of a legal tribunal on a legal question, Hampden should be punished, and punished severely, "whipt," says the insolent apostate, "whipt into his senses. If the rod," he adds, "be so used that it smarts not, I am the more sorry." [1] This is the maintenance of just authority.

In civilised nations, the most arbitrary governments have generally suffered justice to have a free course in private suits. Strafford wished to make every cause in every court subject to the royal prerogative. He complained that in Ireland he was not permitted to meddle in cases between party and party. "I know very well," says he, "that the common lawyers will be passionately against it, who are wont to put such a prejudice upon all other professions, as if none were to be trusted, or capable to administer justice, but themselves; yet how well this suits with monarchy, when they monopolise all to be governed by their year-books, you in England have a costly example." [2] We are really curious to know by what arguments it is to be proved, that the power of interfering in the law-suits of individuals is part of the just authority of the executive government.

It is not strange that a man so careless of the common civil rights, which even despots have generally respected, should treat with scorn the limitations which the constitution imposes on the royal prerogative. We might quote pages: but we will content ourselves with a single specimen:—"The debts of the Crown being taken off, you may govern as you please: and most resolute I am that may be done without borrowing any help forth of the King's lodgings." [3]

Such was the theory of that thorough reform in the state which Strafford meditated. His whole practice, from the day on which he sold himself to the court, was in strict conformity to his theory. For his accomplices various excuses may be urged, ignorance, imbecility, religious bigotry. But Wentworth had no such plea. His intellect was capacious. His early prepossessions were on the side of popular rights. He knew the whole beauty and value of the system which he attempted to deface. He was the first of the Rats, the first of those statesmen whose patriotism has been only the coquetry of political prostitution, and whose profligacy has taught governments to adopt the old maxim of the slave-market, that it is cheaper to buy than to breed, to import defenders from an Opposition than to rear them in a Ministry. He was the first Englishman to whom a peerage was a sacrament of infamy, a baptism into the communion of corruption.[1] As he was the earliest of the hateful list, so was he also by far the greatest; eloquent, sagacious, adventurous, intrepid, ready of invention, immutable of purpose, in every talent which exalts or destroys nations preeminent, the lost Archangel, the Satan of the apostasy. The title for which, at the time of his desertion, he exchanged a name honourably distinguished in the cause of the people, reminds us of the appellation which, from the moment of the first treason, fixed itself on the fallen Son of the Morning,

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[1] Strafford to Laud, 10th April, 1638, *Letters and Despatches*, vol. ii., p. 158.

[2] Strafford to Secretary Coke, 31st January, 1634, vol. i., p. 201.

[3] Strafford to Laud, December, 1633, vol. i., p. 173.

"Satan ;—so call him now.—His former name
Is heard no more in heaven."[2]

The defection of Strafford from the popular party contributed mainly to draw on him the hatred of his contemporaries.[3] It has since made him an object of peculiar interest to those whose lives have been spent, like his, in proving that there is no malice like the malice of a renegade. Nothing can be more natural or becoming than that one turncoat should eulogize another.

Many enemies of public liberty have been distinguished by their private virtues. But Strafford was the same throughout. As was the statesman, such was the kinsman, and such the lover. His conduct towards Lord Mountnorris is recorded by Clarendon. For a word which can scarcely be called rash, which could not have been made the subject of an ordinary civil action, the Lord

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[1] That Wentworth should have been the first man to barter his convictions for a peerage seems hardly compatible with what Macaulay has said elsewhere about the statesmen who gained the favour of the Tudor sovereigns.

[2] *Paradise Lost*, bk. v., lines 658-659.

[3] It is impossible to discuss within the limits of a note the character of Strafford. Professor Gardiner, who has made an exhaustive study of all the materials, although sympathising with Strafford's opponents, has judged him more leniently than Macaulay. Indeed, Professor Gardiner's charity seems to carry him beyond the bounds of likelihood. That Strafford's policy, if successful, would have made the Crown virtually absolute, is admitted, and that a man of such a firm and clear mind must have understood the consequences of his own action seems certain. As to his personal integrity it is not probable that there will ever be an agreement. Whether he sold himself to the King, or had at first engaged in opposition only in order to get rid of Buckingham and himself obtain power, or whether he really thought that the House of Commons in 1628 had gone too far will remain uncertain.

Lieutenant dragged a man of high rank, married to a relative of that saint about whom he whimpered to the Peers, before a tribunal of slaves. Sentence of death was passed.[1] Every thing but death was inflicted. Yet the treatment which Lord Ely experienced was still more scandalous. That nobleman was thrown into prison, in order to compel him to settle his estate in a manner agreeable to his daughter-in-law, whom, as there is every reason to believe, Strafford had debauched.[2] These stories do not rest on vague report. The historians most partial to the minister admit their truth, and censure them in terms which, though too lenient for the occasion, are still severe. These facts are alone sufficient to justify the appellation with which Pym branded him, "the wicked Earl."

In spite of all Strafford's vices, in spite of all his dangerous projects, he was certainly entitled to the benefit of the law; but of the law in all its rigour; of the law according to the utmost strictness of the letter, which killeth. He was not to be torn in pieces by a mob, or stabbed in the back by an assassin. He was not to have punishment meted out to him from his own iniquitous measure. But if justice, in the whole range of its wide armoury, contained one weapon which could pierce him, that weapon his pursuers were bound, before God and man, to employ.

> —— "If he may
> Find mercy in the law, 'tis his: if none,
> Let him not seek 't of us."[3]

Such was the language which the Commons might justly use.

Did then the articles against Strafford strictly amount to high treason? Many people, who know neither what the articles were, nor what high treason is, will answer in the negative, simply because the accused person, speaking for his life, took that ground of defence. The Journals of the Lords show that the Judges were consulted. They answered, with one accord, that the articles on which the Earl was convicted, amounted to high treason. This judicial opinion, even if we suppose it to have been erroneous, goes far to justify the Parliament. The judgment pronounced in the Exchequer Chamber has always been urged by the apologists of Charles in defence of his conduct respecting ship-money. Yet on that occasion there was but a bare majority in favour of the party at whose pleasure all the magistrates composing the tribunal were removable. The decision in the case of Strafford was unanimous; as far as we can judge, it was unbiassed; and, though there may be room for hesitation, we think on the whole that it was reasonable. "It may be remarked," says Mr. Hallam, "that the fifteenth article of the impeachment, charging Strafford with raising money by his own authority, and quartering troops on the people of Ireland, in order to compel their obedience to his unlawful requisitions, upon which, and upon one other article, not upon the whole matter, the Peers voted him guilty, does, at least, approach very nearly, if we may not say more, to a substantive treason within the statute of Edward the Third, as a levying of war against the King."[1] This most sound and just exposition has provoked a very ridiculous reply. "It should seem to be an Irish construction this," says an assailant of Mr. Hallam, "which makes the raising money for the King's service, with his knowledge, and by his approbation, to come under the head of levying war on the King, and therefore to be high treason." Now, people who undertake to write on points of constitutional law should know, what every attorney's clerk and every forward schoolboy on an upper form knows, that, by a fundamental maxim of our polity, the King can do no wrong;[2] that every court is bound to suppose his conduct and his sentiments to be, on every occasion, such as they ought to be; and that no evidence can be received for the purpose of setting aside this loyal and salutary presumption. The Lords, therefore, were bound to take it for granted that the King considered arms which were unlawfully directed against his people as directed against his own throne.

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[1] Mountnorris had given ground of complaint as Vice-Treasurer of Ireland and had opposed the Deputy in Parliament. At a dinner given by the Lord Chancellor of Ireland somebody told how a kinsman of Mountnorris had dropped a stool upon Wentworth's gouty foot. Mountnorris said: "Perhaps it was done in revenge of that public affront which the Lord Deputy had done me formerly. But I have a brother who would not take such a revenge." On the ground that these words were an incitement to mutiny, Mountnorris, being an officer in the army, was tried by court-martial and sentenced to death. He was reprieved by Wentworth, but kept in prison until he had acknowledged the justice of his sentence.

[2] Wentworth alleged that Lord Loftus, the Chancellor, had covenanted to settle certain estates on his eldest son, and when called to account before the Privy Council for not so doing had made an insolent answer. The report that Wentworth had an intrigue with Lady Ely is mentioned by Clarendon, bk. iii., 115, but is discredited by Professor Gardiner.

[3] "King Henry VIII.," act i., scene 2.

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[1] *Constitutional History*, ch. ix. The levying of war against the King is one of the species of treason enumerated in 25 Ed. III., st. 5, ch. ii., the famous Statute of Treasons.

[2] The construction which Macaulay here places upon the maxim that the King can do no wrong was scarcely accepted before the Revolution of 1688. The maxim now means that the King's order cannot be pleaded as justification of an unlawful act. It once meant what the words imply, that there is no legal redress against the King. None of the Tudors would have admitted that an act done for their service and by their command could be an act of treason because it was contrary to law or to the national welfare. Such an interpretation is only possible when a distinction is taken between the Crown and the King, a distinction which can hardly be made until monarchy has been reduced to a form.

The remarks of Mr. Hallam on the bill of attainder, though, as usual, weighty and acute, do not perfectly satisfy us. He defends the principle, but objects to the severity of the punishment. That, on great emergencies, the State may justifiably pass a retrospective act against an offender, we have no doubt whatever. We are acquainted with only one argument on the other side, which has in it enough of reason to bear an answer. Warning, it is said, is the end of punishment. But a punishment inflicted, not by a general rule, but by an arbitrary discretion, cannot serve the purpose of a warning. It is therefore useless; and useless pain ought not to be inflicted. This sophism has found its way into several books on penal legislation. It admits, however, of a very simple refutation. In the first place, punishments *ex post facto* are not altogether useless even as warnings. They are warnings to a particular class which stand in great need of warnings, to favourites and ministers. They remind persons of this description that there may be a day of reckoning for those who ruin and enslave their country in all the forms of law. But this is not all. Warning is, in ordinary cases, the principal end of punishment; but it is not the only end. To remove the offender, to preserve society from those dangers which are to be apprehended from his incorrigible depravity, is often one of the ends. In the case of such a knave as Wild, or such a ruffian as Thurtell,[1] it is a very important end. In the case of a powerful and wicked statesman, it is infinitely more important; so important, as alone to justify the utmost severity, even though it were certain that his fate would not deter others from imitating his example. At present, indeed, we should think it extremely pernicious to take such a course, even with a worse minister than Strafford, if a worse could exist; for, at present, Parliament has only to withhold its support from a Cabinet to produce an immediate change of hands. The case was widely different in the reign of Charles the First. That

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[1] For Wild, see p. 83. John Thurtell, 1794-1824, was hanged for the murder of William Weare, celebrated in the well-known doggerel verses:—

"They cut his throat from ear to ear,
His brains they battered in,
His name was Mr. William Weare,
He lived in Lyon's Inn."

Prince had governed during eleven years without any Parliament; and, even when Parliament was sitting, had supported Buckingham against its most violent remonstrances.

Mr. Hallam is of opinion that a bill of pains and penalties ought to have been passed; but he draws a distinction less just, we think, than his distinctions usually are. His opinion, so far as we can collect it, is this, that there are almost insurmountable objections to retrospective laws for capital punishment, but that, where the punishment stops short of death, the objections are comparatively trifling. Now the practice of taking the severity of the penalty into consideration, when the question is about the mode of procedure and the rules of evidence, is no doubt sufficiently common. We often see a man convicted of a simple larceny on evidence on which he would not be convicted of a burglary. It sometimes happens that a jury, when there is strong suspicion, but not absolute demonstration, that an act, unquestionably amounting to murder, was committed by the prisoner before them, will find him guilty of manslaughter. But this is surely very irrational. The rules of evidence no more depend on the magnitude of the interests at stake than the rules of arithmetic. We might as well say that we have a greater chance of throwing a size when we are playing for a penny than when we are playing for a thousand pounds, as that a form of trial which is sufficient for the purposes of justice, in a matter affecting liberty and property, is insufficient in a matter affecting life. Nay, if a mode of proceeding be too lax for capital cases, it is, *à fortiori*, too lax for all others; for in capital cases, the principles of human nature will always afford considerable security. No judge is so cruel as he who indemnifies himself for scrupulosity in cases of blood, by license in affairs of smaller importance. The difference in tale on the one side far more than makes up for the difference in weight on the other.

If there be any universal objection to retrospective punishment, there is no more to be said. But such is not the opinion of Mr. Hallam. He approves of the mode of proceeding. He thinks that a punishment, not previously affixed by law to the offences of Strafford, should have been inflicted; that Strafford should have been, by act of Parliament, degraded from his rank, and condemned to perpetual banishment. Our difficulty would have been at the first step, and there only. Indeed we can scarcely conceive that any case which does not call for capital punishment can call for punishment by a retrospective act. We can scarcely conceive a man so wicked and so dangerous that the whole course of law must be disturbed in order to reach him, yet not so wicked as to deserve the severest sentence, nor so dangerous as to require the last and surest custody, that of the grave. If we had thought that Strafford might be safely suffered to live in France, we should have thought it better that he should continue to live in England, than that he should be exiled by a special act. As to degradation, it was not the Earl, but the general and the statesman, whom the people had to fear. Essex said, on that occasion, with more truth than elegance, "Stone dead hath no fellow."[1] And often during the civil wars the Parliament had reason to rejoice that an irreversible law and an impassable barrier protected them from the valour and capacity of Wentworth.

It is remarkable that neither Hyde nor Falkland voted against the bill of attainder. There is, indeed, reason to believe that Falkland spoke in favour of it. In one respect, as Mr. Hallam has observed, the proceeding was honourably distinguished from others of the same kind. An act was passed to relieve the children of Strafford from the forfeiture and corruption of blood which were the legal consequences of the sentence. The Crown had never shown equal generosity in a case of treason. The liberal conduct of the Commons has been fully and most appropriately repaid. The House of Wentworth has since that time been as much distinguished by public spirit as by power and splendour, and may at the present moment boast of members with whom Say and Hampden would have been proud to act.

It is somewhat curious that the admirers of Strafford should also be, without a single exception, the admirers of Charles; for, whatever we may think of the conduct of the Parliament towards the unhappy favourite, there can be no doubt that the treatment which he received from his master was disgraceful. Faithless alike to his people and to his tools, the King did not scruple to play the part of the cowardly approver, who hangs his accomplice. It is good that there should be such men as Charles in every league of villany. It is for such men that the offer of pardon and reward which appears after a murder is intended. They are indemnified, remunerated, and despised. The very magistrate who avails himself of their assistance looks on them as more contemptible than the criminal whom they betray. Was Strafford innocent? Was he a meritorious servant of the Crown? If so, what shall we think of the Prince, who having solemnly promised him that not a hair of his head should be hurt, and possessing an unquestioned constitutional right to save him, gave him up to the vengeance of his enemies? There were some points which we know that Charles would not concede, and for which he was willing to risk the chances of civil war. Ought not a King, who will make a stand for any thing, to make a stand for the innocent blood? Was Strafford guilty? Even on this supposition, it is difficult not to feel disdain for the partner of his guilt, the tempter turned punisher. If, indeed, from that time forth, the conduct of Charles had been blameless, it might have been said that his eyes were at last opened to the errors of his former conduct, and that, in sacrificing to the wishes of his Parliament a minister whose crime had been a devotion too zealous to the interests of his prerogative, he gave a painful and deeply humiliating proof of the sincerity of his repentance. We may describe the King's behaviour on this occasion in terms resembling those which Hume has employed when speaking of the conduct of Churchill at the Revolution. It required ever after the most rigid justice and sincerity in the dealings of Charles with his people to vindicate his conduct towards his friend. His subsequent dealings with his people, however, clearly showed, that it was not from any respect for the Constitution, or from any sense of the deep criminality of the plans in which Strafford and himself had been engaged, that he gave up his minister to the axe. It became evident that he had abandoned a servant who, deeply guilty as to all others, was guiltless to him alone, solely in order to gain time for maturing other schemes of tyranny, and purchasing the aid of other Wentworths.[1] He, who would not avail himself of the power which the laws gave him to save an adherent to whom his honour was pledged, soon showed that he did not scruple to break every law and forfeit every pledge, in order to work the ruin of his opponents.

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[1] This was said by Essex in answer to Hyde's endeavour to convince him that justice might be satisfied by condemning Strafford to a heavy fine or long term of imprisonment.

"Put not your trust in princes!" was the expression of the fallen minister, when he heard that Charles had consented to his death. The whole history of the times is a sermon on that bitter text. The defence of the Long Parliament is comprised in the dying words of its victim.

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[1] Charles had no military force at his disposal; the Londoners were in general devoted to the Parliament and formidable riots had broken out. The King's fear for his own life and for the lives of his wife and children is a motive natural enough to satisfy a historian and discreditable enough to satisfy an enemy.

The early measures of that Parliament Mr. Hallam in general approves. But he considers the proceedings which took place after the recess in the summer of 1641 as mischievous and violent. He thinks that, from that time, the demands of the Houses were not warranted by any imminent danger to the Constitution, and that in the war which ensued they were clearly the aggressors. As this is one of the most interesting questions in our history, we will venture to state, at some length, the reasons which have led us to form an opinion on it contrary to that of a writer whose judgment we so highly respect.

We will premise that we think worse of King Charles the First than even Mr. Hallam appears to do. The fixed hatred of liberty which was the principle of the King's public conduct, the unscrupulousness with which he adopted any means which might enable him to attain his ends, the readiness with which he gave promises, the impudence with which he broke them, the cruel indifference with which he threw away his useless or damaged tools, made him, at least till his character was fully exposed, and his power shaken to its foundations, a more dangerous enemy to the Constitution than a man of far greater talents and resolution might have been. Such princes may still be seen, the scandals of the southern thrones of Europe, princes false alike to the accomplices who have served them and to the opponents who have spared them, princes who, in the hour of danger, concede every thing, swear every thing, hold out their cheeks to every smiter, give up to punishment every instrument of their tyranny, and await with meek and smiling implacability the blessed day of perjury and revenge.

We will pass by the instances of oppression and falsehood which disgraced the early part of the reign of Charles. We will leave out of the question the whole history of his third Parliament, the price which he exacted for assenting to the Petition of Right, the perfidy with which he violated his engagements, the death of Eliot, the barbarous punishments inflicted by the Star-Chamber, the ship-money, and all the measures now universally condemned, which disgraced his administration from 1630 to 1640. We will admit that it might be the duty of the Parliament, after punishing the most guilty of his creatures, after abolishing the inquisitorial tribunals which had been the instruments of his tyranny, after reversing the unjust sentences of his victims, to pause in its course. The concessions which had been made were great, the evils of civil war obvious, the advantages even of victory doubtful. The former errors of the King might be imputed to youth, to the pressure of circumstances, to the influence of evil counsel, to the undefined state of the law. We firmly believe that if, even at this eleventh hour, Charles had acted fairly towards his people, if he had even acted fairly towards his own partisans, the House of Commons would have given him a fair chance of retrieving the public confidence. Such was the opinion of Clarendon. He distinctly states that the fury of opposition had abated, that a reaction had begun to take place, that the majority of those who had taken part against the King were desirous of an honourable and complete reconciliation, and that the more violent, or, as it soon appeared, the more judicious members of the popular party were fast declining in credit. The Remonstrance had been carried with great difficulty. The uncompromising antagonists of the court, such as Cromwell, had begun to talk of selling their estates and leaving England. The event soon showed, that they were the only men who really understood how much inhumanity and fraud lay hid under the constitutional language and gracious demeanour of the King.

The attempt to seize the five members was undoubtedly the real cause of the war. From that moment, the loyal confidence with which most of the popular party were beginning to regard the King was turned into hatred and incurable suspicion. From that moment, the Parliament was compelled to surround itself with defensive arms. From that moment, the city assumed the appearance of a garrison. From that moment, in the phrase of Clarendon, the carriage of Hampden became fiercer, that he drew the sword and threw away the scabbard. For, from that moment, it must have been evident to every impartial observer, that, in the midst of professions, oaths, and smiles, the tyrant was constantly looking forward to an absolute sway and to a bloody revenge.

The advocates of Charles have very dexterously contrived to conceal from their readers the real nature of this transaction. By making concessions apparently candid and ample, they elude the great accusation. They allow that the measure was weak and even frantic, an absurd caprice of Lord Digby,[1] absurdly adopted by the King. And thus they save their client from the full penalty of his transgression, by entering a plea of guilty to the minor offence. To us his conduct appears at this day as at the time it appeared to the Parliament and the city. We think it by no means so foolish as it pleases his friends to represent it, and far more wicked.

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[1] George Digby, second Earl of Bristol, 1612-1677, sat in the Long Parliament as member for Dorset and was named of the committee to impeach the Earl of Strafford. But his feelings changed and he strongly resisted the bill of attainder. In June, 1641, he was called up to the House of Lords as Baron Digby. He recommended the impeachment of the five members, but what decided Charles to take that step was his learning that the leaders of the Commons intended to impeach the Queen who had been busy intriguing against the Parliament. Digby took part with

In the first place, the transaction was illegal from beginning to end. The impeachment was illegal. The process was illegal. The service was illegal. If Charles wished to prosecute the five members for treason, a bill against them should have been sent to a grand jury. That a commoner cannot be tried for high treason by the Lords at the suit of the Crown, is part of the very alphabet of our law. That no man can be arrested by the King in person is equally clear. This was an established maxim of our jurisprudence even in the time of Edward the Fourth. "A subject," said Chief Justice Markham to that Prince, "may arrest for treason: the King cannot; for, if the arrest be illegal, the party has no remedy against the King."[1]

The time at which Charles took this step also deserves consideration. We have already said that the ardour which the Parliament had displayed at the time of its first meeting had considerably abated, that the leading opponents of the court were desponding, and that their followers were in general inclined to milder and more temperate measures than those which had hitherto been pursued. In every country, and in none more than in England, there is a disposition to take the part of those who are unmercifully run down, and who seem destitute of all means of defence. Every man who has observed the ebb and flow of public feeling in our own time will easily recall examples to illustrate this remark. An English statesman ought to pay assiduous worship to Nemesis, to be most apprehensive of ruin when he is at the height of power and popularity, and to dread his enemy most when most completely prostrated. The fate of the Coalition Ministry in 1784 is perhaps the strongest instance in our history of the operation of this principle. A few weeks turned the ablest and most extended Ministry that ever existed into a feeble Opposition, and raised a King who was talking of retiring to Hanover to a height of power which none of his predecessors had enjoyed since the Revolution. A crisis

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the King in the Civil War. In 1653 he succeeded his father as Earl of Bristol. After the Restoration he distinguished himself by his enmity to Clarendon.

[1] Quoted in the "Five Knights' Case," *State Trials*, iii., 15.

of this description was evidently approaching in 1642. At such a crisis, a Prince of a really honest and generous nature, who had erred, who had seen his error, who had regretted the lost affections of his people, who rejoiced in the dawning hope of regaining them, would be peculiarly careful to take no step which could give occasion of offence, even to the unreasonable. On the other hand, a tyrant, whose whole life was a lie, who hated the Constitution the more because he had been compelled to feign respect for it, and to whom his own honour and the love of his people were as nothing, would select such a crisis for some appalling violation of law, for some stroke which might remove the chiefs of an Opposition, and intimidate the herd. This Charles attempted. He missed his blow; but so narrowly, that it would have been mere madness in those at whom it was aimed to trust him again.

It deserves to be remarked that the King had, a short time before, promised the most respectable Royalists in the House of Commons, Falkland, Colepepper,[1] and Hyde, that he would take no measure in which that House was concerned, without consulting them. On this occasion he did not consult them. His conduct astonished them more than any other members of the Assembly. Clarendon says that they were deeply hurt by this want of confidence, and the more hurt, because, if they had been consulted, they would have done their utmost to dissuade Charles from so improper a proceeding. Did it never occur to Clarendon, will it not at least occur to men less partial, that there was good reason for this? When the danger to the throne seemed imminent, the King was ready to put himself for a time into the hands of those who, though they disapproved of his past conduct, thought that the remedies had now become worse than the distempers. But we believe that in his heart he regarded both the parties in the Parliament with feelings of aversion which differed only in the degree of their intensity, and that the awful warning which he proposed to give, by immolating the principal supporters of the Remonstrance, was partly intended for the instruction of those who had concurred in censuring the ship-money and in abolishing the Star-Chamber.[1]

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[1] John Colepepper, first Lord Colepepper (date of birth uncertain), d. 1660, was at first one of the most active reformers in the Long Parliament, but in the division of opinion regarding the Church took the same side as Hyde and Falkland. In January, 1642, when Falkland was made secretary, Colepepper was made Chancellor of the Exchequer, Hyde acting with them, but holding no office. He continued to serve Charles in the Civil War, went into exile in 1646, and returned at the Restoration to die within a few weeks.

The Commons informed the King that their members should be forthcoming to answer any charge legally brought against them. The Lords refused to assume the unconstitutional office with which he attempted to invest them. And what was then his conduct? He went, attended by hundreds of armed men, to seize the objects of his hatred in the House itself. The party opposed to him more than insinuated that his purpose was of the most atrocious kind. We will not condemn him merely on their suspicions. We will not hold him answerable for the sanguinary expressions of the loose brawlers who composed his train. We will judge of his act by itself alone. And we say, without hesitation, that it is impossible to acquit him of having meditated violence, and violence which might probably end in blood. He knew that the legality of his proceedings was denied. He must have known that some of the accused members were men not likely to submit peaceably to an illegal arrest. There was every reason to expect that he would find them in their places, that they would refuse to obey his summons, and that the House would support them in their refusal. What course would then have been left to him? Unless we suppose that he went on this expedition for the sole purpose of making himself ridiculous, we must believe that he would have had recourse to force. There would have been a scuffle; and it might not, under such circumstances, have been in his power, even if it had been in his inclination, to prevent a scuffle from ending in a massacre. Fortunately for his fame, unfortunately perhaps for what he prized far more, the interests of his hatred and his ambition, the affair ended differently. The birds, as he said, were flown, and his plan was disconcerted. Posterity is not extreme to mark abortive crime; and thus the King's advocates have found it easy to represent a step, which, but for a trivial accident, might have filled England with mourning and dismay, as a mere error of judgment, wild and foolish, but perfectly innocent. Such was not, however, at the time, the opinion of any party. The most zealous Royalists were so much disgusted and ashamed that they suspended their opposition to the popular party, and, silently at least, concurred in measures of precaution so strong as almost to amount to resistance.

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[1] The attempt to arrest the five members cannot be excused. But Professor Gardiner has come to the conclusion that it was not premeditated. Charles appears to have acted upon a rumour that the leaders of the House of Commons had resolved to impeach the Queen.

From that day, whatever of confidence and loyal attachment had survived the misrule of seventeen years was, in the great body of the people, extinguished, and extinguished for ever. As soon as the outrage had failed, the hypocrisy recommenced. Down to the very eve of this flagitious attempt, Charles had been talking of his respect for the privileges of Parliament and the liberties of his people. He began again in the same style on the morrow; but it was too late. To trust him now would have been, not moderation, but insanity. What common security would suffice against a Prince who was evidently watching his season with that cold and patient hatred which, in the long run, tires out every other passion?

It is certainly from no admiration of Charles that Mr. Hallam disapproves of the conduct of the Houses in resorting to arms. But he thinks that any attempt on the part of that Prince to establish a despotism would have been as strongly opposed by his adherents as by his enemies, and that therefore the Constitution might be considered as out of danger, or, at least, that it had more to apprehend from the war than from the King. On this subject Mr. Hallam dilates at length, and with conspicuous ability. We will offer a few considerations which lead us to incline to a different opinion.

The Constitution of England was only one of a large family. In all the monarchies of Western Europe, during the middle ages, there existed restraints on the royal authority, fundamental laws, and representative assemblies. In the fifteenth century, the government of Castile seems to have been as free as that of our own country. That of Arragon was beyond all question more so. In France, the sovereign was more absolute. Yet, even in France, the States-General alone could constitutionally impose taxes; and, at the very time when the authority of those assemblies was beginning to languish, the Parliament of Paris received such an accession of strength as enabled it, in some measure, to perform the functions of a legislative assembly.[1] Sweden and Denmark had constitutions of a similar description.

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[1] The Parliament of Paris was the highest court of justice in France. It had no claim to represent the nation or to exercise legislative power. But it had acquired the right of registering the decrees of the Crown, and it construed this right to include that of remonstrance against a decree of which it disapproved, even to the point of refusing to register. In the absence of any regular means of expressing public opinion this pretension of the Parliament was popular and it was often made good in things of small consequence or against feeble kings. But a resolute and powerful king could always enforce registration.

Let us overleap two or three hundred years, and contemplate Europe at the commencement of the eighteenth century. Every free constitution, save one, had gone down. That of England had weathered the danger, and was riding in full security. In Denmark and Sweden, the kings had availed themselves of the disputes which raged between the nobles and the commons, to unite all the powers of government in their own hands. In France the institution of the States was only mentioned by lawyers as a part of the ancient theory of their government. It slept a deep sleep, destined to be broken by a tremendous waking. No person remembered the sittings of the three orders, or expected ever to see them renewed. Louis the Fourteenth had imposed on his parliament a patient silence of sixty years. His grandson,[1] after the War of the Spanish Succession, assimilated the constitution of Arragon to that of Castile, and extinguished the last feeble remains of liberty in the Peninsula. In England, on the other hand, the Parliament was infinitely more powerful than it had ever been. Not only was its legislative authority fully established; but its right to interfere, by advice almost equivalent to command, in every department of the executive government, was recognised. The appointment of ministers, the relations with foreign powers, the conduct of a war or a negotiation, depended less on the pleasure of the Prince than on that of the two Houses.

What then made us to differ? Why was it that, in that epidemic malady of constitutions, ours escaped the destroying influence; or rather that, at the very crisis of the disease, a favourable turn took place in England, and in England alone? It was not surely without a cause that so many kindred systems of government, having flourished together so long, languished and expired at almost the same time.

It is the fashion to say, that the progress of civilisation is favourable to liberty. The maxim, though in some sense true, must be limited by many qualifications and exceptions. Wherever a poor and rude nation, in which the form of government is a limited monarchy, receives a great accession of wealth and knowledge, it is in imminent danger of falling under arbitrary power.

In such a state of society as that which existed all over Europe during the middle ages, very slight checks sufficed to keep the sovereign in order. His means of corruption and intimidation were very scanty. He had little money, little patronage, no military establishment. His armies resembled juries. They were drawn out of the mass of the people: they soon returned to it again: and the character which was habitual prevailed over that which was occasional. A campaign of forty days was too short, the discipline of a national militia too lax, to efface from their minds the feelings of civil life. As they carried to the camp the sentiments and interests of the farm and the shop, so they carried back to the farm and the shop the military accomplishments which they had acquired in the camp. At home the soldier learned how to value his rights, abroad how to defend them.

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[1] Philip V., the first Bourbon King of Spain.

Such a military force as this was a far stronger restraint on the regal power than any legislative assembly. The army, now the most formidable instrument of the executive power, was then the most formidable check on that power. Resistance to an established government, in modern times so difficult and perilous an enterprise, was in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the simplest and easiest matter in the world. Indeed, it was far too simple and easy. An insurrection was got up then almost as easily as a petition is got up now. In a popular cause, or even in an unpopular cause favoured by a few great nobles, a force of ten thousand armed men was raised in a week. If the king were, like our Edward the Second and Richard the Second, generally odious, he could not procure a single bow or halbert. He fell at once and without an effort. In such times a sovereign like Louis the Fifteenth or the Emperor Paul[1] would have been pulled down before his misgovernment had lasted for a month. We find that all the fame and influence of our Edward the Third could not save his Madame de Pompadour from the effects of the public hatred.[2]

Hume and many other writers have hastily concluded, that, in the fifteenth century, the English Parliament was altogether servile, because it recognised, without opposition, every successful usurper. That it was not servile its conduct on many occasions of inferior importance is sufficient to prove. But surely it was not strange that the majority of the nobles, and of the deputies chosen by the commons, should approve of revolutions which the nobles and commons had effected. The Parliament did not blindly follow the event of war, but participated in those changes of public sentiment on which the event of war depended. The legal check was secondary and auxiliary to that which the nation held in its own hands. There have always been monarchies in Asia, in which the royal authority has been tempered by fundamental laws, though no legislative body exists to watch over them. The guarantee is the opinion of a community of which every individual is a soldier. Thus, the king of Cabul,[1] as Mr. Elphinstone informs us, cannot augment the land revenue, or interfere with the jurisdiction of the ordinary tribunals.

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[1] Paul I. of Russia, 1754-1801, who succeeded his mother, Catharine II., in 1796. Harsh and imperious almost to madness, he provoked deep discontent which expressed itself in the Russian fashion by his murder.

[2] Alice Perrers, the favourite of Edward III., was impeached and banished by the Good Parliament in 1376.

In the European kingdoms of this description there were representative assemblies. But it was not necessary, that those assemblies should meet very frequently, that they should interfere with all the operations of the executive government, that they should watch with jealousy, and resent with prompt indignation, every violation of the laws which the sovereign might commit. They were so strong that they might safely be careless. He was so feeble that he might safely be suffered to encroach. If he ventured too far, chastisement and ruin were at hand. In fact, the people generally suffered more from his weakness than from his authority. The tyranny of wealthy and powerful subjects was the characteristic evil of the times. The royal prerogatives were not even sufficient for the defence of property and the maintenance of police.

The progress of civilisation introduced a great change. War became a science, and, as a necessary consequence, a trade. The great body of the people grew every day more reluctant to undergo the inconveniences of military service, and better able to pay others for undergoing them. A new class of men, therefore, dependent on the Crown alone, natural enemies of those popular rights which are to them as the dew to the fleece of Gideon, slaves among freemen, freemen among slaves, grew into importance. That physical force which in the dark ages had belonged to the nobles and the commons, and had, far more than any charter or any assembly, been the safeguard of their privileges, was transferred entire to the King. Monarchy gained in two ways. The sovereign was strengthened, the subjects weakened. The great mass of the population, destitute of all military discipline and organization, ceased to exercise any influence by force on political transactions. There have, indeed, during the last hundred and fifty years, been many popular insurrections in Europe: but all have failed except those in which the regular army has been induced to join the disaffected.

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[1] Whom we now style the Ameer of Afghanistan. The reference is to Elphinstone's *Journey to Cabul.*

Those legal checks which, while the sovereign remained dependent on his subjects, had been adequate to the purpose for which they were designed, were now found wanting. The dikes which had been sufficient while the waters were low were not high enough to keep out the spring-tide. The deluge passed over them; and, according to the exquisite illustration of Butler, the formal boundaries which had excluded it, now held it in. The old constitutions fared like the old shields and coats of mail. They were the defences of a rude age; and they did well enough against the weapons of a rude age. But new and more formidable means of destruction were invented. The ancient panoply became useless; and it was thrown aside to rust in lumber-rooms, or exhibited only as part of an idle pageant.

Thus absolute monarchy was established on the continent. England escaped; but she escaped very narrowly. Happily our insular situation, and the pacific policy of James, rendered standing armies unnecessary here, till they had been for some time kept up in the neighbouring kingdoms. Our public men had therefore an opportunity of watching the effects produced by this momentous change on governments which bore a close analogy to that established in England. Every where they saw the power of the monarch increasing, the resistance of assemblies which were no longer supported by a national force gradually becoming more and more feeble, and at length altogether ceasing. The friends and the enemies of liberty perceived with equal clearness the causes of this general decay. It is the favourite theme of Strafford. He advises the King to procure from the Judges a recognition of his right to raise an army at his pleasure. "This place well fortified," says he, "for ever vindicates the monarchy at home from under the conditions and restraints of subjects."[1] We firmly believe that he was in the right. Nay; we believe that, even if no deliberate scheme of arbitrary government had been formed by the sovereign and his ministers, there was great reason to apprehend a natural extinction of the Constitution. If, for example, Charles had played the part of Gustavus Adolphus,[2] if he had carried on a popular war for the defence of the Protestant cause in Germany, if he had gratified the national pride by a series of victories, if he had formed an army of forty or fifty thousand devoted soldiers, we do not see what chance the nation would have had of escaping from despotism. The Judges would have given as strong a decision in favour of camp-money as they gave in favour of ship-money. If they had been scrupulous, it would have made little difference. An individual who resisted would have been treated as Charles treated Eliot, and as Strafford wished to treat Hampden. The Parliament might have been summoned once in twenty years, to congratulate a King on his accession, or to give solemnity to some great measure of state. Such had been the fate of legislative assemblies as powerful, as much respected, as high-spirited, as the English Lords and Commons.[1]

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[1] Strafford to the King, *Letters and Despatches*, 31st March, 1637, vol. ii., p. 62.

[2] Gustavus II., better known as Gustavus Adolphus, 1594-1633, succeeded to the throne of Sweden in 1611. He was the first soldier and one of the foremost states-

The two Houses, surrounded by the ruins of so many free constitutions overthrown or sapped by the new military system, were required to intrust the command of an army and the conduct of the Irish war to a King who had proposed to himself the destruction of liberty as the great end of his policy. We are decidedly of opinion that it would have been fatal to comply. Many of those who took the side of the King on this question would have cursed their own loyalty, if they had seen him return from war at the head of twenty thousand troops, accustomed to carnage and free quarters in Ireland.

We think, with Mr. Hallam, that many of the Royalist nobility and gentry were true friends to the Constitution, and that, but for the solemn protestations by which the King bound himself to govern according to the law for the future, they never would have joined his standard. But surely they underrated the public danger. Falkland[2] is commonly selected as the

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men of his age. By his intervention in the Thirty Years' War the Protestants of Germany were saved from destruction.

[1] There is much force in these remarks, and the survival of the English Parliament was largely due to the absence of a standing army. But it was also due in part to the fact that free institutions were better organised and more firmly based here than in neighbouring countries. Gneist has fully illustrated this difference in his *Constitutional History of England.*

[2] Lucius Cary, second Viscount Falkland, 1610-1643, sat in the Short Parliament of 1640 and in the Long Parliament. A man of singularly noble character, a lover of freedom and earnest in the pursuit of truth, he was for some time among the foremost reformers, but was driven by his antipathy to dogmatic Presbyterianism into joining the King. He became Secretary of State in January, 1642, and fought for Charles in the Civil War. It broke his heart, and he sought and found death in the first battle of Newbury. Clarendon has embalmed his memory in a beautiful passage of his *History.*

most respectable specimen of this class. He was indeed a man of great talents and of great virtues, but, we apprehend, infinitely too fastidious for public life. He did not perceive that, in such times as those on which his lot had fallen, the duty of a statesman is to choose the better cause and to stand by it, in spite of those excesses by which every cause, however good in itself, will be disgraced. The present evil always seemed to him the worst. He was always going backward and forward; but it should be remembered to his honour that it was always from the stronger to the weaker side that he deserted. While Charles was oppressing the people, Falkland was a resolute champion of liberty. He attacked Strafford. He even concurred in strong measures against Episcopacy. But the violence of his party annoyed him, and drove him to the other party, to be equally annoyed there. Dreading the success of the cause which he had espoused, disgusted by the courtiers of Oxford, as he had been disgusted by the patriots of Westminster, yet bound by honour not to abandon the cause for which he was in arms, he pined away, neglected his person, went about moaning for peace, and at last rushed desperately on death, as the best refuge in such miserable times. If he had lived through the scenes that followed, we have little doubt that he would have condemned himself to share the exile and beggary of the royal family; that he would then have returned to oppose all their measures; that he would have been sent to the Tower by the Commons as a stifler of the Popish Plot, and by the King as an accomplice in the Rye-House Plot; and that, if he had escaped being hanged, first by Scroggs,[1] and then by Jefferies,[2] he would, after manfully opposing James the Second through years of tyranny, have been seized with a fit of compassion at the very moment of the Revolution, have voted for a regency, and died a nonjuror.

We do not dispute that the royal party contained many excellent men and excellent citizens. But this we say, that they did not discern those times. The peculiar glory of the Houses of Parliament is that, in the great plague and mortality of constitutions, they took their stand between the living and the dead. At the very crisis of our destiny, at the very moment when the fate which had passed on every other nation was about to pass on England, they arrested the danger.

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[1] William Scroggs, 1623-1683, became Lord Chief Justice in 1678 and distinguished himself by unfairness and brutality towards the political prisoners of all sects and parties who came before him.

[2] George Jefferies, first Baron Jefferies, 1648-1689, appointed Recorder of London in 1678, Lord Chief Justice in 1683 and Chancellor in 1685, is too well known for further notice here.

Those who conceive that the parliamentary leaders were desirous merely to maintain the old constitution, and those who represent them as conspiring to subvert it, are equally in error. The old constitution, as we have attempted to show, could not be maintained. The progress of time, the increase of wealth, the diffusion of knowledge, the great change in the European system of war, rendered it impossible that any of the monarchies of the middle ages should continue to exist on the old footing. The prerogative of the crown was constantly advancing. If the privileges of the people were to remain absolutely stationary, they would relatively retrograde. The monarchical and democratical parts of the government were placed in a situation not unlike that of the two brothers in the Fairy Queen,[1] one of whom saw the soil of his inheritance daily washed away by the tide and joined to that of his rival. The portions had at first been fairly meted out. By a natural and constant transfer, the one had been extended; the other had dwindled to nothing. A new partition, or a compensation, was necessary to restore the original equality.

It was now, therefore, absolutely necessary to violate the formal part of the constitution, in order to preserve its spirit. This might have been done, as it was done at the Revolution, by expelling the reigning family, and calling to the throne princes who, relying solely on an elective title, would find it necessary to respect the privileges and follow the advice of the assemblies to which they owed every thing, to pass every bill which the Legislature strongly pressed upon them, and to fill the offices of state with men in whom the Legislature confided. But, as the two Houses did not choose to change the dynasty, it was necessary that they should do directly what at the Revolution was done indirectly. Nothing is more usual than to hear it said that, if the Houses had contented themselves with making such a reform in the government under Charles as was afterwards made under William, they would have had the highest claim to national gratitude; and that in their violence they overshot the mark. But how was it possible to make such a settlement under Charles? Charles was not, like William and the princes of the Hanoverian line, bound by community of interests and dangers to the Parliament. It was therefore necessary that he should be bound by treaty and statute.

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[1] *Faerie Queene*, bk. v., canto 4.

Mr. Hallam reprobates, in language which has a little surprised us, the nineteen propositions into which the Parliament digested its scheme.[1] Is it possible to doubt that, if James the Second had remained in the island, and had been suffered, as he probably would in that case have been suffered, to keep his crown, conditions to the full as hard would have been imposed on him? On the other hand, we fully admit that, if the Long Parliament had pronounced the departure of Charles from London an abdication, and had called Essex or Northumberland to the throne,[2] the new prince might have safely been suffered to reign without such restrictions. His situation would have been a sufficient guarantee.

In the nineteen propositions we see very little to blame except the articles against the Catholics.[3] These, however, were in the spirit of that age; and to some sturdy churchmen in our own, they may seem to palliate even the good which the Long Parliament effected. The regulation with respect to new creations of Peers is the only other article about which we entertain any doubt.[4] One of the propositions is that the judges shall hold their offices during good behaviour. To this surely no exception will be taken. The right of directing the education and marriage of the princes was most properly claimed by the Parliament, on the same ground on which, after the Revolution, it was enacted, that no king, on pain of forfeiting his throne, should espouse a Papist. Unless we condemn the statesmen of the Revolution, who conceived that England could not safely be governed by a sovereign married to a Catholic Queen, we can scarcely condemn the Long Parliament because, having a sovereign so situated, they thought it necessary to place him under strict restraints. The influence of Henrietta Maria had already been deeply felt in political affairs. In the regulation of her family, in the education and marriage of her children, it was still more likely to be felt. There might be another Catholic queen; possibly, a Catholic king. Little as we are disposed to join in the vulgar clamour on this subject, we think that such an event ought to be, if possible, averted; and this could only be done, if Charles was to be left on the throne, by placing his domestic arrangements under the control of Parliament.

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[1] The nineteen propositions were the final demands of the Parliament sent to the King at York in June, 1642. They are printed in full in Professor Gardiner's *Constitutional Documents of the Puritan Revolution.*

[2] The Earls of Essex and Northumberland adhered throughout to the cause of the Parliament.

[3] The Houses demanded that the persecuting laws against Roman Catholics should be enforced and made more severe.

[4] No peer was to sit or vote unless admitted to Parliament by the consent of both Houses.

A veto on the appointment of ministers was demanded. But this veto Parliament has virtually possessed ever since the Revolution. It is no doubt very far better that this power of the Legislature should be exercised as it is now exercised, when any great occasion calls for interference, than that at every change the Commons should have to signify their approbation or disapprobation in form. But, unless a new family had been placed on the throne, we do not see how this power could have been exercised as it is now exercised. We again repeat, that no restraints which could be imposed on the princes who reigned after the Revolution could have added to the security which their title afforded. They were compelled to court their parliaments. But from Charles nothing was to be expected which was not set down in the bond.

It was not stipulated that the King should give up his negative on acts of Parliament. But the Commons had certainly shown a strong disposition to exact this security also. "Such a doctrine," says Mr. Hallam, "was in this country as repugnant to the whole history of our laws, as it was incompatible with the subsistence of the monarchy in any thing more than a nominal preeminence."[1] Now this article has been as completely carried into effect by the Revolution as if it had been formally inserted in the Bill of Rights and the Act of Settlement. We are surprised, we confess, that Mr. Hallam should attach so much importance to a prerogative which has not been exercised for a hundred and thirty years, which probably will never be exercised again, and which can scarcely, in any conceivable case, be exercised for a salutary purpose.

But the great security, the security without which every other would have been insufficient, was the power of the sword. This both parties thoroughly understood. The Parliament insisted on having the command of the militia and the direction of the Irish war. "By God, not for an hour!" exclaimed the King. "Keep the militia," said the Queen, after the defeat of the royal party: "Keep the militia; that will bring back every thing."[1] That, by the old constitution, no military authority was lodged in the Parliament, Mr. Hallam has clearly shown. That it is a species of authority which ought not to be permanently lodged in large and divided assemblies, must, we think, in fairness be conceded. Opposition, publicity, long discussion, frequent compromise; these are the characteristics of the proceedings of such assemblies. Unity, secrecy, decision, are the qualities which military arrangements require. There were, therefore, serious objections to the proposition of the Houses on this subject. But, on the other hand, to trust such a King, at such a crisis, with the very weapon which, in hands less dangerous, had destroyed so many free constitutions, would have been the extreme of rashness. The jealousy with which the oligarchy of Venice and the States of Holland regarded their generals and armies induced them perpetually to interfere in matters of which they were incompetent to judge. This policy secured them against military usurpation, but placed them under great disadvantages in war. The uncontrolled power which the King of France exercised over his troops enabled him to conquer his enemies, but enabled him also to oppress his people. Was there any intermediate course? None, we confess, altogether free from objection. But on the whole, we conceive that the best measure would have been that which the Parliament over and over proposed, namely, that for a limited time the power of the sword should be left to the two Houses, and that it should revert to the Crown when the constitution should be firmly established, and when the new securities of freedom should be so far strengthened by prescription that it would be difficult to employ even a standing army for the purpose of subverting them.

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[1] *Constitutional History*, ch. ix. The remark is characteristic of Hallam's formal and decorous mind. But he was quite correct in saying that the necessity of accepting any bill offered to him reduces the sovereign's power to almost nothing.

Mr. Hallam thinks that the dispute might easily have been compromised, by enacting that the King should have no power to keep a standing army on foot without the consent of Parliament. He reasons as if the question had been merely theoretical, and as if at that time no army had been wanted. "The kingdom," he says, "might have well dispensed, in that age, with any military organization."[2] Now, we think that Mr. Hallam overlooks the most important circumstance in the whole case. Ireland was actually in rebellion;[1] and a great expedition would obviously be necessary to reduce that kingdom to obedience. The Houses had therefore to consider, not an abstract question of law, but an urgent practical question, directly involving the safety of the state. They had to consider the expediency of immediately giving a great army to a King who was at least as desirous to put down the Parliament of England as to conquer the insurgents of Ireland.[2]

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[1] "Preserve the militia and never abandon it. By that all will come back to you" (Letter of the Queen to Charles quoted by Gardiner, *History of the Great Civil War*, vol. ii., p. 555).

[2] *Constitutional History*, ch. ix.

Of course we do not mean to defend all the measures of the Houses. Far from it. There never was a perfect man. It would, therefore, be the height of absurdity to expect a perfect party or a perfect assembly. For large bodies are far more likely to err than individuals. The passions are inflamed by sympathy; the fear of punishment and the sense of shame are diminished by partition. Every day we see men do for their faction what they would die rather than do for themselves.

Scarcely any private quarrel ever happens, in which the right and wrong are so exquisitely divided that all the right lies on one side, and all the wrong on the other. But here was a schism which separated a great nation into two parties. Of these parties, each was composed of many smaller parties. Each contained many members, who differed far less from their moderate opponents than from their violent allies. Each reckoned among its supporters many who were determined in their choice by some accident of birth, of connection, or of local situation. Each of them attracted to itself in multitudes those fierce and turbid spirits, to whom the clouds and whirlwinds of the political hurricane are the atmosphere of life. A party, like a camp, has its sutlers and camp-followers, as well as its soldiers. In its progress it collects round it a vast retinue, composed of people who thrive by its custom or are amused by its display, who may be sometimes reckoned, in an ostentatious enumeration, as forming a part of it, but who give no aid to its operations, and take but a languid interest in its success, who relax its discipline and dishonour its flag by their irregularities, and who, after a disaster, are perfectly ready to cut the throats and rifle the baggage of their companions.

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[1] The rebellion which broke out in Ulster in October, 1641, rapidly overspread the greater part of Ireland. Many atrocities were committed and were magnified into a general massacre of the Protestants. The party adverse to the King were the more unwilling to give him means of reconquering Ireland because they ascribed the rebellion to a deep Catholic conspiracy, and thought that if not Charles, at least his servants, might be implicated. In reality the rebellion had been provoked by wholesale eviction of the Irish to make room for English and Scotch settlers.

[2] With most of Macaulay's remarks on the constitutional crisis and on the final demands of the Parliament recent historians would agree, although they would add that Charles could as little be expected to grant so much as the Parliament to ask for less. By that constitution which had grown up in the course of centuries powers were vested in the King and in the Parliament respectively which, used to the full, would enable either party to annul the other, so that the peace and good government of the realm depended upon an unceasing process of compromise which in turn depended upon the temper and circumstances of the rival authorities. Such were their circumstances and their temper in 1642 that the compromise was at an end and it had to be decided who should give and who should receive the law. The decision could scarcely be otherwise than by trial of battle. Moreover, as Professor Gardiner has shown, the most insurmountable difficulty was that arising from ecclesiastical differences. The friends and adversaries of the bishops and of the Book of Common Prayer could neither tolerate each other within the Church nor consent to recognise new forms of belief outside the Church. It was the same contradiction which rendered fruitless the negotiations at Oxford, Uxbridge and Newcastle. The blame in this matter rests equally with the King and the Parliament, or with neither, as both stood on the common level of their age.

Thus it is in every great division; and thus it was in our civil war. On both sides there was, undoubtedly, enough of crime and enough of error to disgust any man who did not reflect that the whole history of the species is made up of little except crimes and errors.[1] Misanthropy is not the temper which qualifies a man to act in great affairs, or to judge of them.

"Of the Parliament," says Mr. Hallam, "it may be said, I think, with not greater severity than truth, that scarce two or three public acts of justice, humanity, or generosity, and very few of political wisdom or courage, are recorded of them, from their quarrel with the King, to their expulsion by Cromwell."[2] Those who may agree with us in the opinion which we have expressed as to the original demands of the Parliament will scarcely concur in this strong censure. The propositions which the Houses made at Oxford, at Uxbridge, and at Newcastle, were in strict accordance with these demands. In the darkest period of the war, they showed no disposition to concede any vital principle. In the fulness of their success, they showed no disposition to encroach beyond these limits. In this respect we cannot but think that they showed justice and generosity, as well as political wisdom and courage.

The Parliament was certainly far from faultless. We fully agree with Mr. Hallam in reprobating their treatment of Laud. For the individual, indeed, we entertain a more unmitigated contempt than for any other character in our history. The fondness with which a portion of the church regards his memory, can be compared only to that perversity of affection which sometimes leads a mother to select the monster or the idiot of the family as the object of her especial favour. Mr. Hallam has incidentally observed, that, in the correspondence of Laud with Strafford, there are no indications of a sense of duty towards God or man. The admirers of the Archbishop have, in consequence, inflicted upon the public a crowd of extracts designed to prove the contrary. Now, in all those passages, we see nothing which a prelate as wicked as Pope Alexander[1] or Cardinal Dubois[2] might not have written. Those passages indicate no sense of duty to God or man, but simply a strong interest in the prosperity and dignity of the order to which the writer belonged; an interest which, when kept within certain limits, does not deserve censure, but which can never be considered as a virtue. Laud is anxious to accommodate satisfactorily the disputes in the University of Dublin. He regrets to hear that a church is used as a stable, and that the benefices of Ireland are very poor. He is desirous that, however small a congregation may be, service should be regularly performed. He expresses a wish that the judges of the court before which questions of tithe are generally brought should be selected with a view to the interest of the clergy. All this may be very proper; and it may be very proper that an alderman should stand up for the tolls of his borough, and an East India director for the charter of his Company. But it is ridiculous to say that these things indicate piety and benevolence. No primate, though he were the most abandoned of mankind, could wish to see the body, with the influence of which his own influence was identical, degraded in the public estimation by internal dissensions, by the ruinous state of its edifices, and by the slovenly performance of its rites.[3] We willingly acknowledge that the particular letters in question have very little harm in them; a compliment which cannot often be paid either to the writings or to the actions of Laud.

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[1] Perhaps a reminiscence of Gibbon: "His reign (that of Antoninus) is marked by the rare advantage of furnishing very few materials for history; which is, indeed, little more than the register of the crimes, follies and misfortunes of mankind" (*Decline and Fall*, ch. iv.).

[2] *Constitutional History*, ch. x.

Bad as the Archbishop was, however, he was not a traitor within the statute. Nor was he by any means so formidable as to be a proper subject for a retrospective ordinance of the legislature. His mind had not expansion enough to comprehend a great scheme, good or bad. His oppressive acts were not, like those of the Earl of Strafford, parts of an extensive system. They were the luxuries in which a mean and irritable disposition indulges itself from day to day, the excesses natural to a little mind in a great place. The severest punishment which the two Houses could have inflicted on him would have been to set him at liberty and send him to Oxford. There he might have staid, tortured by his own diabolical temper, hungering for Puritans to pillory and mangle, plaguing the Cavaliers, for want of somebody else to plague, with his peevishness and absurdity, performing grimaces and antics in the cathedral, continuing that incomparable diary, which we never see without forgetting the vices of his heart in the imbecility of his intellect, minuting down his dreams, counting the drops of blood which fell from his nose, watching the direction of the salt, and listening for the note of the screech-owls.[1] Contemptuous mercy was the only vengeance which it became the Parliament to take on such a ridiculous old bigot.

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[1] Rodrigo Borgia, 1431-1503, who was elected to the Papacy in 1492 and took the style of Alexander VI.

[2] Guillaume Dubois, 1656-1723, a clergyman of humble birth, tutor to the young Duke of Chartres (better known by his later title of Orléans), gained his confidence, and when the duke became Regent of France rose to be his most influential minister. He was a man of courage and ability, but of scandalously immoral life.

[3] We may give the archbishop credit for some better motive in wishing that the clergy should have a livelihood, that churches should be properly kept and services held with regularity and decency.

The Houses, it must be acknowledged, committed great errors in the conduct of the war, or rather one great error, which brought their affairs into a condition requiring the most perilous expedients. The parliamentary leaders of what may be called the first generation, Essex, Manchester, Northumberland, Hollis, even Pym, all the most eminent men, in short, Hampden excepted, were inclined to half measures. They dreaded a decisive victory almost as much as a decisive overthrow. They wished to bring the King into a situation which might render it necessary for him to grant their just and wise demands, but not to subvert the constitution or to change the dynasty. They were afraid of serving the purposes of those fierce and determined enemies of monarchy, who now began to show themselves in the lower ranks of the party. The war was, therefore, conducted in a languid and inefficient manner. A resolute leader might have brought it to a close in a month. At the end of three campaigns, however, the event was still dubious; and that it had not been decidedly unfavourable to the cause of liberty was principally owing to the skill and energy which the more violent Roundheads had displayed in subordinate situations. The conduct of Fairfax and Cromwell at Marston had exhibited a remarkable contrast to that of Essex at Edgehill, and to that of Waller at Lansdowne.

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[1] These and such-like trifles are matters of frequent notice in Laud's "Diary," printed in vol. iii. of his *Works* (Oxford edition, 1853).

If there be any truth established by the universal experience of nations, it is this, that to carry the spirit of peace into war is a weak and cruel policy. The time for negotiation is the time for deliberation and delay. But when an extreme case calls for that remedy which is in its own nature most violent, and which, in such cases, is a remedy only because it is violent, it is idle to think of mitigating and diluting. Languid war can do nothing which negotiation or submission will not do better: and to act on any other principle is, not to save blood and money, but to squander them.

This the parliamentary leaders found. The third year of hostilities was drawing to a close; and they had not conquered the King. They had not obtained even those advantages which they had expected from a policy obviously erroneous in a military point of view. They had wished to husband their resources. They now found that in enterprises like theirs, parsimony is the worst profusion. They had hoped to effect a reconciliation. The event taught them that the best way to conciliate is to bring the work of destruction to a speedy termination. By their moderation many lives and much property had been wasted. The angry passions which, if the contest had been short, would have died away almost as soon as they appeared, had fixed themselves in the form of deep and lasting hatred. A military caste had grown up. Those who had been induced to take up arms by the patriotic feelings of citizens had begun to entertain the professional feelings of soldiers. Above all, the leaders of the party had forfeited its confidence. If they had, by their valour and abilities, gained a complete victory, their influence might have been sufficient to prevent their associates from abusing it. It was now necessary to choose more resolute and uncompromising commanders. Unhappily the illustrious man who alone united in himself all the talents and virtues which the crisis required, who alone could have saved his country from the present dangers without plunging her into others, who alone could have united all the friends of liberty in obedience to his commanding genius and his venerable name, was no more. Something might still be done. The Houses might still avert that worst of all evils, the triumphant return of an imperious and unprincipled master. They might still preserve London from all the horrors of rapine, massacre, and lust.[1] But their hopes of a victory, as spotless as their cause, of a reconciliation which might knit together the hearts of all honest Englishmen for the defence of the public good, of durable tranquillity, of temperate freedom, were buried in the grave of Hampden.[2]

The self-denying ordinance was passed, and the army was remodelled.[3] These measures were undoubtedly full of danger. But all that was left to the Parliament was to take the less of two dangers. And we think that, even if they could have accurately foreseen all that followed, their decision ought to have been the same. Under any circumstances, we should have preferred Cromwell to Charles. But there could be no comparison between Cromwell and Charles victorious, Charles restored, Charles enabled to feed fat all the hungry grudges of his smiling rancour and his cringing pride. The next visit of his Majesty to his faithful Commons would have been more serious than that with which he last honoured them; more serious than that which their own General paid them some years after. The King would scarce have been content with praying that the Lord would deliver him from Vane, or with pulling Marten by the cloak.[4] If, by fatal mismanagement, nothing was left to England but a choice of tyrants, the last tyrant whom she should have chosen was Charles.

From the apprehension of this worst evil the Houses were soon delivered by their new leaders. The armies of Charles were every where routed, his fastnesses stormed, his party humbled and subjugated. The King himself fell into the hands of the Parliament; and both the King and the Parliament soon fell into the hands of the army. The fate of both the captives was the same. Both were treated alternately with respect and with insult. At length the natural life of one, and the political life of the other, were terminated by violence; and the power for which both had struggled was united in a single hand. Men naturally sympathize with the calamities of individuals; but they are inclined to look on a fallen party with contempt rather than with pity. Thus misfortune turned the greatest of Parliaments into the despised Rump, and the worst of Kings into the Blessed Martyr.

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[1] It is unfair to the Cavaliers to assume that they were resolved to treat London worse than other towns which they captured. They were guilty of a great deal of pillage, but certainly as sparing of the lives of non-combatants as the other side.

[2] There is no reason to suppose that Hampden, if he had lived, could have solved either the constitutional or the ecclesiastical problem. Even if he had possessed the necessary insight he would not have persuaded two angry factions to adopt the compromise which after long disorder and suffering was adopted in 1689.

[3] By the self-denying ordinance passed in 1645 members of either House of Parliament were disabled from holding military command. In consequence, the Earl of Essex, the Earl of Manchester, Sir William Waller and other Parliamentary officers retired, leaving the field clear for Fairfax and for Cromwell, who, although a member of Parliament, managed to evade the ordinance. About the same time a standing army was formed by the Parliament and provision made for paying it punctually. This was the "New Model" army which proved irresistible.

[4] An allusion to Cromwell's behaviour when he expelled the remnant of the Long Parliament in April, 1653.

Mr. Hallam decidedly condemns the execution of Charles; and in all that he says on that subject we heartily agree. We fully concur with him in thinking that a great social schism, such as the civil war, is not to be confounded with an ordinary treason, and that the vanquished ought to be treated according to the rules, not of municipal, but of international law. In this case the distinction is of the less importance, because both international and municipal law were in favour of Charles. He was a prisoner of war by the former, a King by the latter. By neither was he a traitor. If he had been successful, and had put his leading opponents to death, he would have deserved severe censure; and this without reference to the justice or injustice of his cause. Yet the opponents of Charles, it must be admitted, were technically guilty of treason. He might have sent them to the scaffold without violating any established principle of jurisprudence. He would not have been compelled to overturn the whole constitution in order to reach them. Here his own case differed widely from theirs. Not only was his condemnation in itself a measure which only the strongest necessity could vindicate; but it could not be procured without taking several previous steps, every one of which would have required the strongest necessity to vindicate it. It could not be procured without dissolving the Government by military force, without establishing precedents of the most dangerous description, without creating difficulties which the next ten years were spent in removing, without pulling down institutions which it soon became necessary to reconstruct, and setting up others which almost every man was soon impatient to destroy. It was necessary to strike the House of Lords out of the constitution, to exclude members of the House of Commons by force, to make a new crime, a new tribunal, a new mode of procedure. The whole legislative and judicial systems were trampled down for the purpose of taking a single head. Not only those parts of the constitution which the republicans were desirous to destroy, but those which they wished to retain and exalt, were deeply injured by these transactions. High Courts of Justice began to usurp the functions of juries. The remaining delegates of the people were soon driven from their seats by the same military violence which had enabled them to exclude their colleagues.

If Charles had been the last of his line, there would have been an intelligible reason for putting him to death. But the blow which terminated his life at once transferred the allegiance of every Royalist to an heir, and an heir who was at liberty. To kill the individual was, under such circumstances, not to destroy, but to release the King.

We detest the character of Charles; but a man ought not to be removed by a law *ex post facto*, even constitutionally procured, merely because he is detestable. He must also be very dangerous. We can scarcely conceive that any danger which a state can apprehend from any individual could justify the violent measures which were necessary to procure a sentence against Charles. But in fact the danger amounted to nothing. There was indeed danger from the attachment of a large party to his office. But this danger his execution only increased. His personal influence was little indeed. He had lost the confidence of every party. Churchmen, Catholics, Presbyterians, Independents, his enemies, his friends, his tools, English, Scotch, Irish, all divisions and subdivisions of his people had been deceived by him. His most attached councillors turned away with shame and anguish from his false and hollow policy, plot intertwined with plot, mine sprung beneath mine, agents disowned, promises evaded, one pledge given in private, another in public. "Oh, Mr. Secretary," says Clarendon, in a letter to Nicholas, "those stratagems have given me more sad hours than all the misfortunes in war which have befallen the King, and look like the effects of God's anger towards us." [1]

The abilities of Charles were not formidable. His taste in the fine arts was indeed exquisite; and few modern sovereigns have written or spoken better. But he was not fit for active life. In negotiation he was always trying to dupe others, and duping only himself. As a soldier, he was feeble, dilatory, and miserably wanting, not in personal courage, but in the presence of mind which his station required. His delay at Gloucester saved the parliamentary party from destruction. At Naseby, in the very crisis of his fortune, his want of self-possession spread a fatal panic through his army. The story which Clarendon tells of that affair reminds us of the excuses by which Bessus and Bobadil explain their cudgellings.[1] A Scotch nobleman, it seems, begged the King not to run upon his death, took hold of his bridle, and turned his horse round. No man who had much value for his life would have tried to perform the same friendly office on that day for Oliver Cromwell.

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[1] Hyde to Nicholas, 12th February, 1647, *Clarendon State Papers*, vol. ii., p. 336.

One thing, and one alone, could make Charles dangerous,—a violent death. His tyranny could not break the high spirit of the English people. His arms could not conquer, his arts could not deceive them; but his humiliation and his execution melted them into a generous compassion. Men who die on a scaffold for political offences almost always die well. The eyes of thousands are fixed upon them. Enemies and admirers are watching their demeanour. Every tone of voice, every change of colour, is to go down to posterity. Escape is impossible. Supplication is vain. In such a situation pride and despair have often been known to nerve the weakest minds with fortitude adequate to the occasion. Charles died patiently and bravely; not more patiently or bravely, indeed, than many other victims of political rage; not more patiently or bravely than his own Judges, who were not only killed, but tortured; or than Vane,[2] who had always been considered as a timid man. However, the King's conduct during his trial and at his execution made a prodigious impression. His subjects began to love his memory as heartily as they had hated his person; and posterity has estimated his character from his death rather than from his life.

To represent Charles as a martyr in the cause of Episcopacy is absurd. Those who put him to death cared as little for the Assembly of Divines as for the Convocation, and would, in all probability, only have hated him the more if he had agreed to set up the Presbyterian discipline. Indeed, in spite of the opinion of Mr. Hallam, we are inclined to think that the attachment of Charles to the Church of England was altogether political. Human nature is, we admit, so capricious that there may be a single sensitive point in a conscience which every where else is callous. A man without truth or humanity may have some strange scruples about a trifle. There was one devout warrior in the royal camp whose piety bore a great resemblance to that which is ascribed to the King. We mean Colonel Turner.[1] That gallant Cavalier was hanged, after the Restoration, for a flagitious burglary. At the gallows he told the crowd that his mind received great consolation from one reflection: he had always taken off his hat when he went into a church. The character of Charles would scarcely rise in our estimation, if we believed that he was pricked in conscience after the manner of this worthy loyalist, and that while violating all the first rules of Christian morality, he was sincerely scrupulous about church-government. But we acquit him of such weakness. In 1641, he deliberately confirmed the Scotch Declaration which stated that the government of the church by archbishops and bishops was contrary to the word of God. In 1645, he appears to have offered to set up Popery in Ireland. That a King who had established the Presbyterian religion in one kingdom, and who was willing to establish the Catholic religion in another, should have insurmountable scruples about the ecclesiastical constitution of the third, is altogether incredible.[2] He himself says in his letters that he looks on Episcopacy as a stronger support of monarchical power than even the army. From causes which we have already considered, the Established Church had been, since the Reformation, the great bulwark of the prerogative. Charles wished, therefore, to preserve it. He thought himself necessary both to the Parliament and to the army. He did not foresee, till too late, that by paltering with the Presbyterians, he should put both them and himself into the power of a fiercer and more daring party. If he had foreseen it, we suspect that the royal blood which still cries to Heaven every thirtieth of January, for judgments only to be averted by salt-fish and egg-sauce, would never have been shed. One who had swallowed the Scotch Declaration would scarcely strain at the Covenant.

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[1] Bessus is a bragging coward in Beaumont and Fletcher's play of "A King and no King;" Bobadil, a similar character in Ben Jonson's play of "Every Man in His Humour." Charles was not a great warrior, but he was not so poor a creature in the field as this outbreak of Macaulay would suggest.

[2] See p. 51.

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[1] James Turner (not the same with the original of Dugald Dalgetty) was a lieutenant-colonel of the City militia in the Civil War, and therefore not a Cavalier. He was executed on the 21st of January, 1664 (see Pepys, *Diary.*)

[2] That Charles ratified the abolition of Episcopacy by the Scotch Parliament and that his agent, Lord Glamorgan, promised to the Irish the full restoration of Catholicism is true, but the just inference seems to be not that he was indifferent on religious questions, but that he was habitually insincere and most of all insincere in dealing with rebels. He wrote to Juxon: "My regal authority once settled, I make no question of recovering Episcopal government: and God is my witness, my chiefest end in regaining my power is to do the Church service" (Gardiner, *Civil War*, ii., p. 552). Extreme duplicity has sometimes gone with genuine religious feeling. Had Charles cared as little for Episcopacy or for the doctrines associated with Laud as Macaulay supposes, he might certainly have made terms for himself and regained much of his power.

The death of Charles and the strong measures which led to it raised Cromwell to a height of power fatal to the infant Commonwealth. No men occupy so splendid a place in history as those who have founded monarchies on the ruins of republican institutions. Their glory, if not of the purest, is assuredly of the most seductive and dazzling kind. In nations broken to the curb, in nations long accustomed to be transferred from one tyrant to another, a man without eminent qualities may easily gain supreme power. The defection of a troop of guards, a conspiracy of eunuchs, a popular tumult, might place an indolent senator or a brutal soldier on the throne of the Roman world. Similar revolutions have often occurred in the despotic states of Asia. But a community which has heard the voice of truth and experienced the pleasures of liberty, in which the merits of statesmen and of systems are freely canvassed, in which obedience is paid, not to persons, but to laws, in which magistrates are regarded, not as the lords, but as the servants of the public, in which the excitement of a party is a necessary of life, in which political warfare is reduced to a system of tactics; such a community is not easily reduced to servitude. Beasts of burden may easily be managed by a new master. But will the wild ass submit to the bonds? Will the unicorn serve and abide by the crib? Will leviathan hold out his nostrils to the hook? The mythological conqueror of the East, whose enchantments reduced wild beasts to the tameness of domestic cattle, and who harnessed lions and tigers to his chariot, is but an imperfect type of those extraordinary minds which have thrown a spell on the fierce spirits of nations unaccustomed to control, and have compelled raging factions to obey their reins and swell their triumph. The enterprise, be it good or bad, is one which requires a truly great man. It demands courage, activity, energy, wisdom, firmness, conspicuous virtues, or vices so splendid and alluring as to resemble virtues.

Those who have succeeded in this arduous undertaking form a very small and a very remarkable class. Parents of tyranny, heirs of freedom, kings among citizens, citizens among kings, they unite in themselves the characteristics of the system which springs from them, and those of the system from which they have sprung. Their reigns shine with a double light, the last and dearest rays of departing freedom mingled with the first and brightest glories of empire in its dawn. The high qualities of such a prince lend to despotism itself a charm drawn from the liberty under which they were formed, and which they have destroyed. He resembles an European who settles within the Tropics, and carries thither the strength and the energetic habits acquired in regions more propitious to the constitution. He differs as widely from princes nursed in the purple of imperial cradles, as the companions of Gama[1] from their dwarfish and imbecile progeny which, born in a climate unfavourable to its growth and beauty, degenerates more and more, at every descent, from the qualities of the original conquerors.

In this class three men stand preeminent, Cæsar, Cromwell, and Bonaparte. The highest place in this remarkable triumvirate belongs undoubtedly to Cæsar. He united the talents of Bonaparte to those of Cromwell; and he possessed also, what neither Cromwell nor Bonaparte possessed, learning, taste, wit, eloquence, the sentiments and the manners of an accomplished gentleman.

Between Cromwell and Napoleon Mr. Hallam has instituted a parallel, scarcely less ingenious than that which Burke has drawn between Richard Cœur de Lion and Charles the Twelfth of Sweden.[2] In this parallel, however, and indeed throughout his work, we think that he hardly gives Cromwell fair measure. "Cromwell," says he, "far unlike his antitype, never showed any signs of a legislative mind, or any desire to place his renown on that noblest basis, the amelioration of social institutions."[3] The difference in this respect, we conceive, was not in the character of the men, but in the character of the revolutions by means of which they rose to power. The civil war in England had been undertaken to defend and restore; the republicans of France set themselves to destroy. In England, the principles of the common law had never been disturbed, and most even of its forms had been held sacred. In France, the law and its ministers had been swept away together. In France, therefore, legislation necessarily became the first business of the first settled government which rose on the ruins of the old system. The admirers of Inigo Jones[4] have always maintained that his works are inferior to those of Sir Christopher Wren, only because the great fire of London gave Wren such a field for the display of his powers as no architect in the history of the world ever possessed. Similar allowance must be made for Cromwell. If he erected little that was new, it was because there had been no general devastation to clear a space for him. As it was, he reformed the representative system in a most judicious manner. He rendered the administration of justice uniform throughout the island. We will quote a passage from his speech to the Parliament in September, 1656, which contains, we think, simple and rude as the diction is, stronger indications of a legislative mind, than are to be found in the whole range of orations delivered on such occasions before or since.

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[1] Vasco da Gama, who first reached India by way of the Cape.

[2] Burke has drawn this parallel in his unfinished *Abridgment of English History*, ch. vii.

[3] *Constitutional History*, ch. x.

[4] Inigo Jones, 1573-1652. His best-known works are the Banqueting Hall at Whitehall, the only completed part of a vast palace designed for Charles I., and St. Paul's Church, Covent Garden.

"There is one general grievance in the nation. It is the law. I think, I may say it, I have as eminent judges in this land as have been had, or that the nation has had for these many years. Truly, I could be particular as to the executive part, to the administration; but that would trouble you. But the truth of it is, there are wicked and abominable laws that will be in your power to alter. To hang a man for sixpence, threepence, I know not what,—to hang for a trifle, and pardon murder, is in the ministration of the law through the ill framing of it. I have known in my experience abominable murders quitted; and to see men lose their lives for petty matters! This is a thing that God will reckon for; and I wish it may not lie upon this nation a day longer than you have an opportunity to give a remedy; and I hope I shall cheerfully join with you in it."[1]

Mr. Hallam truly says that, though it is impossible to rank Cromwell with Napoleon as a general, yet "his exploits were as much above the level of his contemporaries, and more the effects of an original uneducated capacity." Bonaparte was trained in the best military schools; the army which he led to Italy was one of the finest that ever existed. Cromwell passed his youth and the prime of his manhood in a civil situation. He never looked on war till he was more than forty years old. He had first to form himself, and then to form his troops. Out of raw levies he created an army, the bravest and the best disciplined, the most orderly in peace, and the most terrible in war, that Europe had seen. He called this body into existence. He led it to conquest. He never fought a battle without gaining it. He never gained a battle without annihilating the force opposed to him. Yet his victories were not the highest glory of his military system. The respect which his troops paid to property, their attachment to the laws and religion of their country, their submission to the civil power, their temperance, their intelligence, their industry, are without parallel. It was after the Restoration that the spirit which their great leader had infused into them was most signally displayed. At the command of the established government, an established government which had no means of enforcing obedience, fifty thousand soldiers whose backs no enemy had ever seen, either in domestic or in continential war, laid down their arms, and retired into the mass of the people, thenceforward to be distinguished only by superior diligence, sobriety, and regularity in the pursuits of peace, from the other members of the community which they had saved.

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[1] See Carlyle, *Letters and Speeches*, speech v.

In the general spirit and character of his administration, we think Cromwell far superior to Napoleon. "In civil government," says Mr. Hallam, "there can be no adequate parallel between one who had sucked only the dregs of a besotted fanaticism, and one to whom the stores of reason and philosophy were open."[1] These expressions, it seems to us, convey the highest eulogium on our great countryman. Reason and philosophy did not teach the conqueror of Europe to command his passions, or to pursue, as a first object, the happiness of his people. They did not prevent him from risking his fame and his power in a frantic contest against the principles of human nature and the laws of the physical world, against the rage of the winter and the liberty of the sea. They did not exempt him from the influence of that most pernicious of superstitions, a presumptuous fatalism. They did not preserve him from the inebriation of prosperity, or restrain him from indecent querulousness in adversity. On the other hand, the fanaticism of Cromwell never urged him on impracticable undertakings, or confused his perception of the public good. Our countryman, inferior to Bonaparte in invention, was far superior to him in wisdom. The French Emperor is among conquerors what Voltaire is among writers, a miraculous child. His splendid genius was frequently clouded by fits of humour as absurdly perverse as those of the pet of the nursery, who quarrels with his food, and dashes his playthings to pieces. Cromwell was emphatically a man. He possessed, in an eminent degree, that masculine and full-grown robustness of mind, that equally diffused intellectual health, which, if our national partiality does not mislead us, has peculiarly characterised the great men of

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[1] *Constitutional History*, ch. x.

England. Never was any ruler so conspicuously born for sovereignty. The cup which has intoxicated almost all others sobered him. His spirit, restless from its own buoyancy in a lower sphere, reposed in majestic placidity as soon as it had reached the level congenial to it. He had nothing in common with that large class of men who distinguish themselves in subordinate posts, and whose incapacity becomes obvious as soon as the public voice summons them to take the lead. Rapidly as his fortunes grew, his mind expanded more rapidly still. Insignificant as a private citizen, he was a great general; he was a still greater prince. Napoleon had a theatrical manner, in which the coarseness of a revolutionary guard-room was blended with the ceremony of the old Court of Versailles. Cromwell, by the confession even of his enemies, exhibited in his demeanour the simple and natural nobleness of a man neither ashamed of his origin nor vain of his elevation, of a man who had found his proper place in society, and who felt secure that he was competent to fill it. Easy, even to familiarity, where his own dignity was concerned, he was punctilious only for his country. His own character he left to take care of itself; he left it to be defended by his victories in war, and his reforms in peace. But he was a jealous and implacable guardian of the public honour. He suffered a crazy Quaker[1] to insult him in the gallery of Whitehall, and revenged himself only by liberating him and giving him a dinner. But he was prepared to risk the chances of war to avenge the blood of a private Englishman.

No sovereign ever carried to the throne so large a portion of the best qualities of the middling orders, so strong a sympathy with the feelings and interests of his people. He was sometimes driven to arbitrary measures; but he had a high, stout, honest, English heart. Hence it was that he loved to surround his throne with such men as Hale[2] and Blake.[3] Hence it was that he allowed so large a share of political liberty to his subjects, and that, even when an opposition dangerous to his power and to his person almost compelled him to govern by the sword, he was still anxious to leave a germ from which, at a more favourable season, free institutions might spring. We firmly believe that, if his first Parliament had not commenced its debates by disputing his title, his government would have been as mild at home as it was energetic and able abroad. He was a soldier; he had risen by war. Had his ambition been of an impure or selfish kind, it would have been easy for him to plunge his country into continental hostilities on a large scale, and to dazzle the restless factions which he ruled, by the splendour of his victories. Some of his enemies have sneeringly remarked, that in the successes obtained under his administration he had no personal share; as if a man who had raised himself from obscurity to empire solely by his military talents could have any unworthy reason for shrinking from military enterprise. This reproach is his highest glory. In the success of the English navy he could have no selfish interest. Its triumphs added nothing to his fame; its increase added nothing to his means of overawing his enemies; its great leader was not his friend. Yet he took a peculiar pleasure in encouraging that noble service which, of all the instruments employed by an English government, is the most impotent for mischief, and the most powerful for good. His administration was glorious, but with no vulgar glory. It was not one of those periods of overstrained and convulsive exertion which necessarily produce debility and languor. Its energy was natural, healthful, temperate. He placed England at the head of the Protestant interest, and in the first rank of Christian powers. He taught every nation to value her friendship and to dread her enmity. But he did not squander her resources in a vain attempt to invest her with that supremacy which no power, in the modern system of Europe, can safely affect, or can long retain.

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[1] George Fox, the founder of the Society of Friends, had several interviews with Cromwell, but none quite after the fashion described by Macaulay. In 1654 Fox, who had been brought up to London a prisoner, was brought before the Protector and took the opportunity of exhortation. Cromwell listened patiently, and said at parting, "Come again to my house, for if thou and I were but an hour a day together, we should be nearer one to the other. I wish no more ill to thee than to my own soul" (Carlyle, *Letters and Speeches*, pt. ix.).

[2] Matthew Hale, 1609-1676, the celebrated lawyer, Chief Justice of the Common Pleas under Cromwell and Chief Justice of the King's Bench under Charles II.

[3] Robert Blake, 1559-1657, the renowned admiral.

This noble and sober wisdom had its reward. If he did not carry the banners of the Commonwealth in triumph to distant capitals, if he did not adorn Whitehall with the spoils of the Stadthouse and the Louvre, if he did not portion out Flanders and Germany into principalities for his kinsmen and his generals, he did not, on the other hand, see his country overrun by the armies of nations which his ambition had provoked. He did not drag out the last years of his life an exile and a prisoner, in an unhealthy climate and under an ungenerous gaoler, raging with the impotent desire of vengeance, and brooding over visions of departed glory. He went down to his grave in the fulness of power and fame; and he left to his son an authority which any man of ordinary firmness and prudence would have retained.[1]

But for the weakness of that foolish Ishbosheth,[2] the opinions which we have been expressing would, we believe, now have formed the orthodox creed of good Englishmen. We might now be writing under the government of his Highness Oliver the Fifth or Richard the Fourth, Protector, by the grace of God, of the Commonwealth of England, Scotland, and Ireland, and the dominions thereto belonging. The form of the great founder of the dynasty, on horseback, as when he led the charge at Naseby, or on foot, as when he took the mace from the table of the Commons, would adorn our squares and overlook our public offices from Charing-Cross; and sermons in his praise would be duly preached on his lucky day, the third of September,[3] by court-chaplains, guiltless of the abomination of the surplice.

But, though his memory has not been taken under the patronage of any party, though every device has been used to blacken it, though to praise him would long have been a punishable crime, truth and merit at last prevail. Cowards who had trembled at the very sound of his name, tools of office who, like Downing,[4] had been proud of the honour of lacqueying his coach, might insult him in loyal speeches and addresses. Venal poets might transfer to the King the same eulogies, little the worse for wear, which they had bestowed on the Protector. A fickle multitude might crowd to shout and scoff round the gibbeted remains of the greatest Prince and Soldier of the age. But when the Dutch cannon started an effeminate tyrant in his own palace, when the conquests which had been won by the armies of Cromwell were sold to pamper the harlots of Charles, when Englishmen were sent to fight under foreign banners, against the independence of Europe and the Protestant religion, many honest hearts swelled in secret at the thought of one who had never suffered his country to be ill used by any but himself. It must indeed have been difficult for any Englishman to see the salaried Viceroy of France, at the most important crisis of his fate, sauntering through his haram, yawning and talking nonsense over a dispatch, or beslobbering his brother and his courtiers in a fit of maudlin affection, without a respectful and tender remembrance of him before whose genius the young pride of Louis and the veteran craft of Mazarine had stood rebuked, who had humbled Spain on the land and Holland on the sea, and whose imperial voice had arrested the sails of the Libyan pirates and the persecuting fires of Rome. Even to the present day his character, though constantly attacked, and scarcely ever defended, is popular with the great body of our countrymen.

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[1] This may well be doubted. Cromwell had failed in every endeavour to take the place of a constitutional monarch and had been forced to remain a military dictator. But in this character no man can succeed unless he is a great general, able to call forth all the powers of his troops and turn them to the best advantage. The part of a military dictator, always difficult, was doubly difficult in the period of the Commonwealth, when the army was not a mere machine but a strongly republican body in which there were many diversities of political and religious belief, whilst the nation, accustomed for ages to self-government and the rule of law, was steadily tending to return to its traditions.

[2] "He who, when Saul was dead, without a blow
Made foolish Ishbosheth the crown forego."
—DRYDEN, *Absalom and Achitophel*, pt. i.

[3] The 3rd of September was the anniversary of Cromwell's victories at Dunbar in 1650 and at Worcester in 1651. On that day he died.

[4] Downing, Sir George, 1623(?)-1684, who served Cromwell both in war and diplomacy, sat in both his Parliaments and joined in pressing him to accept the crown. At the Restoration Downing made his peace with Charles and became a fierce Royalist, using every means to ensure the arrest of the regicides in Dutch territory.

The most blameable act of his life was the execution of Charles. We have already strongly condemned that proceeding; but we by no means consider it as one which attaches any peculiar stigma of infamy to the names of those who participated in it. It was an unjust and injudicious display of violent party spirit; but it was not a cruel or perfidious measure. It had all those features which distinguish the errors of magnanimous and intrepid spirits from base and malignant crimes.

From the moment that Cromwell is dead and buried, we go on in almost perfect harmony with Mr. Hallam to the end of his book. The times which followed the Restoration peculiarly require that unsparing impartiality which is his most distinguishing virtue. No part of our history, during the last three centuries, presents a spectacle of such general dreariness. The whole breed of our statesmen seems to have degenerated; and their moral and intellectual littleness strikes us with the more disgust, because we see it placed in immediate contrast with the high and majestic qualities of the race which they succeeded. In the great civil war, even the bad cause had been rendered respectable and amiable by the purity and elevation of mind which many of its friends displayed. Under Charles the Second, the best and noblest of ends was disgraced by means the most cruel and sordid. The rage of faction succeeded to the love of liberty. Loyalty died away into servility. We look in vain among the leading politicians of either side for steadiness of principle, or even for that vulgar fidelity to party which, in our time, it is esteemed infamous to violate. The inconsistency, perfidy, and baseness, which the leaders constantly practised, which their followers defended, and which the great body of the people regarded, as it seems, with little disapprobation, appear in the present age almost incredible. In the age of Charles the First, they would, we believe, have excited as much astonishment.

Man, however, is always the same. And when so marked a difference appears between two generations, it is certain that the solution may be found in their respective circumstances. The principal statesmen of the reign of Charles the Second were trained during the civil war and the revolutions which followed it. Such a period is eminently favourable to the growth of quick and active talents. It forms a class of men, shrewd, vigilant, inventive; of men whose dexterity triumphs over the most perplexing combinations of circumstances, whose presaging instinct no sign of the times can elude. But it is an unpropitious season for the firm and masculine virtues. The statesman who enters on his career at such a time, can form no permanent connections, can make no accurate observations on the higher parts of political science. Before he can attach himself to a party, it is scattered. Before he can study the nature of a government, it is overturned. The oath of abjuration comes close on the oath of allegiance. The association which was subscribed yesterday is burned by the hangman to-day. In the midst of the constant eddy and change, self-preservation becomes the first object of the adventurer. It is a task too hard for the strongest head to keep itself from becoming giddy in the eternal whirl. Public spirit is out of the question. A laxity of principle, without which no public man can be eminent or even safe, becomes too common to be scandalous; and the whole nation looks coolly on instances of apostasy which would startle the foulest turncoat of more settled times.[1]

The history of France since the Revolution affords some striking illustrations of these remarks. The same man was a servant of the Republic, of Bonaparte, of Lewis the Eighteenth, of Bonaparte again after his return from Elba, of Lewis again after his return from Ghent. Yet all these manifold treasons by no means seemed to destroy his influence, or even to fix any peculiar stain of infamy on his character. We, to be sure, did not know what to make of him; but his countrymen did not seem to be shocked; and in truth they had little right to be shocked: for there was scarcely one Frenchman distinguished in the state or in the army, who had not, according to the best of his talents and opportunities, emulated the example. It was natural, too, that this should be the case. The rapidity and violence with which change followed change in the affairs of France towards the close of the last century had taken away the reproach of inconsistency, unfixed the principles of public men, and produced in many minds a general scepticism and indifference about principles of government.

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[1] Compare a similar passage in the essay on Sir William Temple, vol. ii., p. 249.

No Englishman who has studied attentively the reign of Charles the Second, will think himself entitled to indulge in any feelings of national superiority over the *Dictionnaire des Girouettes*.[1] Shaftesbury[2] was surely a far less respectable man than Talleyrand;[3] and it would be injustice even to Fouché[4] to compare him with Lauderdale.[5] Nothing, indeed, can more clearly show how low the standard of political morality had fallen in this country than the fortunes of the two British statesmen whom we have named. The government wanted a ruffian to carry on the most atrocious system of misgovernment with which any nation was ever cursed, to extirpate Presbyterianism by fire and sword, by the drowning of women, by the frightful torture of the boot. And they found him among the chiefs of the rebellion and the subscribers of the Covenant. The opposition looked for a chief to head them in the most desperate attacks ever made, under the forms of the Constitution, on any English administration: and they selected the minister who had the deepest share in the worst acts of the Court, the soul of the Cabal, the counsellor who had shut up the Exchequer and urged on the Dutch war. The whole political drama was of the same cast. No unity of plan, no decent propriety of character and costume, could be found in that wild and monstrous harlequinade. The whole was made up of extravagant transformations and burlesque contrasts; Atheists turned Puritans; Puritans turned Atheists; republicans defending the divine right of Kings; prostitute courtiers clamouring for the liberties of the people; judges inflaming the rage of mobs; patriots pocketing bribes from foreign powers; a Popish prince torturing Presbyterians into Episcopacy in one part of the island; Presbyterians cutting off the heads of Popish noblemen and gentlemen in the other. Public opinion has its natural flux and reflux. After a violent burst, there is commonly a reaction. But vicissitudes so extraordinary as those which marked the reign of Charles the Second can only be explained by supposing an utter want of principle in the political world. On neither side was there fidelity enough to face a reverse. Those honourable retreats from power which, in later days, parties have often made, with loss, but still in good order, in firm union, with unbroken spirit and formidable means of annoyance, were utterly unknown. As soon as a check took place a total rout followed: arms and colours were thrown away. The vanquished troops, like the Italian mercenaries of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, enlisted on the very field of battle, in the service of the conquerors. In a nation proud of its sturdy justice and plain good sense, no party could be found to take a firm middle stand between the worst of oppositions and the worst of courts. When, on charges as wild as Mother Goose's tales, on the testimony of wretches who proclaimed themselves to be spies and traitors, and whom every body now believes to have been also liars and murderers, the offal of gaols and brothels, the leavings of the hangman's whip and shears, Catholics guilty of nothing but their religion were led like sheep to the Protestant shambles, where were the loyal Tory gentry and the passively obedient clergy? And where, when the time of retribution came, when laws were strained and juries packed to destroy the leaders of the Whigs, when charters were invaded, when Jefferies and Kirke were making Somersetshire what Lauderdale and Graham had made Scotland, where were the ten thousand brisk boys of Shaftesbury, the members of ignoramus juries, the wearers of the Polish medal?[1] All-powerful to destroy others, unable to save themselves, the members of the two parties oppressed and were oppressed, murdered and were murdered, in their turn. No lucid interval occurred between the frantic paroxysms of two contradictory illusions.

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[1] Macaulay refers to an amusing little book published at Paris in 1815, and entitled *Dictionnaire des Girouettes, ou Nos Contemporains peints d'après eux-mêmes, Ouvrage dans lequel sont rapportés les discours, proclamations, chansons, extraits d'ouvrages écrits sous les gouvernemens qui ont eu lieu en France depuis vingt-cinq ans; et les places, faveurs et titres qu'ont obtenus dans les différentes circonstances les hommes d'Etat, gens de lettres, généraux, artistes, sénateurs, chansonniers, évêques, préfets, journalistes, ministres*, etc. Par une Société des Girouettes.

[2] For Shaftesbury see vol. ii., p. 301.

[3] Charles Maurice Talleyrand de Périgord, 1754-1838, who in youth entered the clerical profession and became Bishop of Autun, but afterwards returned to secular life. He was successively a liberal member of the Constituent Assembly, an exile, a servant of the Directory, of the First Consul and Emperor, of Louis XVIII. and of Louis Philippe.

[4] Joseph Fouché, 1763-1820, also began by taking holy orders, but gave up his profession and was elected to the Convention in 1792. After distinguishing himself by his ferocity as a Jacobin, he served as Minister of Police under the Directory and Bonaparte whom he in turn betrayed. He was even employed for a short time by Louis XVIII.

[5] John Maitland, second Earl and first Duke of Lauderdale, 1616-1682, who took the Covenant and was one of the most active Presbyterian statesmen during the Civil Wars. He was taken at the battle of Worcester and remained in prison until 1660. After the Restoration he gained the entire confidence of Charles, becoming virtually supreme minister for Scotland. He now persecuted the Covenanters in the most cruel manner. In 1672 he was rewarded with a dukedom.

To the frequent changes of the government during the twenty years which had preceded the Restoration, this unsteadiness is in a great measure to be attributed. Other causes had also been at work. Even if the country had been governed by the house of Cromwell or by the remains of the Long Parliament, the extreme austerity of the Puritans would necessarily have produced a revulsion. Towards the close of the Protectorate many signs indicated that a time of license was at hand. But the restoration of Charles the Second rendered the change wonderfully rapid and violent. Profligacy became a test of orthodoxy and loyalty, a qualification for rank and office. A deep and general taint infected the morals of the most influential classes, and spread itself through every province of letters. Poetry inflamed the passions; philosophy undermined the principles; divinity itself, inculcating an abject reverence for the Court, gave additional effect to the licentious example of the Court. We look in vain for those qualities which lend a charm to the errors of high and ardent natures, for the generosity, the tenderness, the chivalrous delicacy, which ennoble appetites into passions, and impart to vice itself a portion of the majesty of virtue. The excesses of that age remind us of the humours of a gang of footpads, revelling with their favourite beauties at a flash-house. In the fashionable libertinism there is a hard, cold ferocity, an impudence, a lowness, a dirtiness, which can be paralleled only among the heroes and heroines of that filthy and heartless literature which encouraged it. One nobleman of great abilities wanders about as a Merry-Andrew. Another harangues the mob stark naked from a window. A third lays an ambush to cudgel a man who has offended him. A knot of gentlemen of high rank and influence combine to push their fortunes at court by circulating stories intended to ruin an innocent girl,[1] stories which had no foundation, and which, if they had been true, would never have passed the lips of a man of honour. A dead child is found in the palace, the offspring of some maid of honour by some courtier, or perhaps by Charles himself. The whole flight of pandars and buffoons pounce upon it, and carry it in triumph to the royal laboratory, where his Majesty, after a brutal jest, dissects it for the amusement of the assembly, and probably of its father among the rest. The favourite Duchess stamps about Whitehall, cursing and swearing.[2] The ministers employ their time at the council-board in making mouths at each other and taking off each other's gestures for the amusement of the King. The Peers at a conference begin to pommel each other and to tear collars and periwigs. A speaker in the House of Commons gives offence to the Court. He is waylaid by a gang of bullies, and his nose is cut to the bone.[3] This ignominious dissoluteness, or rather, if we may venture to designate it by the only proper word, blackguardism of feeling and manners, could not but spread from private to public life. The cynical sneers, the epicurean sophistry, which had driven honour and virtue from one part of the character, extended their influence over every other. The second generation of the statesmen of this reign were worthy pupils of the schools in which they had been trained, of the gaming-table of Grammont, and the tiring-room of Nell. In no other age could such a trifler as Buckingham have exercised any political influence. In no other age could the path to power and glory have been thrown open to the manifold infamies of Churchill.

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[1] The medal struck to commemorate the throwing out of the indictment for treason against Shaftesbury (24th November, 1681) became known as the Polish medal.

> "Of all our antic sights and pageantry
> Which English idiots run in crowds to see,
> The Polish Medal bears the prize alone."
>
> —DRYDEN, *The Medal.*

"It was a standing joke among the opponents of Shaftesbury that he hoped to be chosen King of Poland at the vacancy when John Sobieski was elected" (Scott's *Dryden*, vol. ix., p. 441).

When the despairing Whigs thought of insurrection in 1682, Shaftesbury boasted that in the City of London he had ten thousand brisk boys ready.

The history of Churchill shows, more clearly perhaps than

[1] Sir Charles Berkeley and other gentlemen, thinking that James, Duke of York, was weary of his connection with Anne Hyde, laid a plot to take away her character in order to curry favour with him (Grammont's *Memoirs*).

[2] These illustrations of the vices of the time and many others will be found in Grammont's *Memoirs* and the *Diaries* of Pepys and Evelyn.

[3] John Coventry, Sir, d. 1682, who was elected for Weymouth in 1667 and in a debate concerning a proposed tax on playhouses made a saucy allusion to the King's immorality. The outrage produced an act making such offences capital.

that of any other individual, the malignity and extent of the corruption which had eaten into the heart of the public morality. An English gentleman of good family attaches himself to a Prince who has seduced his sister, and accepts rank and wealth as the price of her shame and his own. He then repays by ingratitude the benefits which he has purchased by ignominy, betrays his patron in a manner which the best cause cannot excuse, and commits an act, not only of private treachery, but of distinct military desertion. To his conduct at the crisis of the fate of James, no service in modern times has, as far as we remember, furnished any parallel. The conduct of Ney,[1] scandalous enough no doubt, is the very fastidiousness of honour in comparison of it. The perfidy of Arnold[2] approaches it most nearly. In our age and country no talents, no services, no party attachments, could bear any man up under such mountains of infamy. Yet, even before Churchill had performed those great actions which in some degree redeem his character with posterity, the load lay very lightly on him. He had others in abundance to keep him in countenance. Godolphin,[3] Orford,[4] Danby, the trimmer Halifax,[5] the renegade Sunderland,[6] were all men of the same class.

Where such was the political morality of the noble and the wealthy, it may easily be conceived that those professions which, even in the best times, are peculiarly liable to corruption, were in a frightful state. Such a bench and such a bar England has never seen. Jones,[1] Scroggs, Jefferies, North,[2] Wright,[3] Sawyer,[4] Williams,[5] are to this day the spots and blemishes of our legal chronicles. Differing in constitution and in situation, whether blustering or cringing, whether persecuting Protestants or Catholics, they were equally unprincipled and inhuman. The part which the Church played was not equally atrocious; but it must have been exquisitely diverting to a scoffer. Never were principles so loudly professed, and so shamelessly abandoned. The Royal prerogative had been magnified to the skies in theological works. The doctrine of passive obedience had been preached from innumerable pulpits. The University of Oxford had sentenced the works of the most moderate constitutionalists to the flames. The accession of a Catholic King, the frightful cruelties committed in the west of England, never shook the steady loyalty of the clergy. But did they serve the King for nought? He laid his hand on them, and they cursed him to his face. He touched the revenue of a college and the liberty of some prelates; and the whole profession set up a yell worthy of Hugh Peters himself.[6] Oxford sent her plate to an invader with more alacrity than she had shown when Charles the First requested it. Nothing was said about the wickedness of resistance till resistance had done its work, till the anointed vicegerent of Heaven had been driven away, and till it had become plain that he would never be restored, or would be restored at least under strict limitations. The clergy went back, it must be owned, to their old theory, as soon as they found that it would do them no harm.

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[1] Michel Ney, 1769-1815, one of the most brilliant soldiers of the French Revolution and Empire, was among the first generals to recognise Louis XVIII. at his restoration. He was sent to arrest Napoleon after his return from Elba, but presently passed over to him and fought for him at Quatre Bras and Waterloo. For this treason he was condemned and shot after the second restoration.

[2] Benedict Arnold, 1741-1801, one of the ablest and most successful of the American generals in the War of Independence, having fallen under suspicion of embezzling the public funds, formed a plan to betray West Point and the troops under his command to the English. But the plot was discovered, and Arnold barely made his escape.

[3] Sidney Godolphin, 1645-1712, entered Parliament in 1668, became Secretary of State in 1684, and was made Lord Treasurer and Baron Godolphin in 1685. He was a Commissioner of the Treasury under William III. Under Anne he was from 1702 to 1710 Lord Treasurer and virtual Prime Minister. He was a moderate Tory.

[4] Edward Russell, 1653-1727, was active in the Revolution of 1688 and gained the victory of La Hogue in 1692. In 1694 he was made First Lord of the Admiralty and in 1697 was created Earl of Orford. He was a vehement Whig, but was not above intriguing with James when dissatisfied with William.

[5] For Danby see vol. ii., p. 284, and for Halifax. vol. ii., p. 306.

[6] Robert Spencer, second Earl of Sunderland, 1640-1702, became Secretary of State in 1679 and again in 1683. In 1685 he was made Lord President. In order to secure his position under James he became a Catholic, and in order to regain it under William he became a Protestant once more. Under William III. he was appointed one of the lords justices to govern the kingdom in William's absence, 1697.

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[1] Thomas Jones, Sir, died in 1692, became Judge of the King's Bench in 1676 and Chief Justice of the Common Pleas in 1683. He was usually subservient to the Crown, but was dismissed in 1686 for refusing to declare in favour of the suspending power.

[2] Francis North, 1637-1685, became Chief Justice of the Common Pleas in 1675 and distinguished himself by his bias against accused Whigs. In 1682 he was made Lord Keeper, and in 1683 Baron Guilford. He was an able and accomplished man.

[3] Robert Wright, Sir, died in 1689, became a Baron of the Exchequer in 1684 and Chief Justice of the King's Bench in 1687. He upheld the dispensing power, sat in the Court of Ecclesiastical Commission and sentenced deserters to death at a time when there was no Mutiny Act. After the Revolution he was committed to Newgate, where he died.

[4] Robert Sawyer, Sir, 1633-1692, became Attorney-General in 1681, and was severely blamed for exceeding his duty against Whig prisoners. Although he opposed the measures of James II. against the Church and at length resigned his office, acted as counsel to the seven bishops and accepted the Revolution, he was expelled the Convention and had no more advancement.

[5] William Williams, Sir, 1634-1700, had acted as a strenuous Whig under Charles II. and had been chosen Speaker. But he made his peace with James II., was appointed Solicitor-General in 1687, and distinguished himself in the prosecution of the seven bishops.

[6] An allusion to the attempt of James II. to force a Roman Catholic president upon Magdalen College, Oxford, and to the trial of the seven bishops for petitioning against the King's order that they should read his Declaration of Indulgence from the pulpit. Hugh Peters, 1598-1660, was an Independent preacher, conspicuous in the time of the Civil War and the Commonwealth and executed as a traitor after the Restoration.

It is principally to the general baseness and profligacy of the times that Clarendon is indebted for his high reputation.[1] He was, in every respect, a man unfit for his age, at once too good for it and too bad for it. He seemed to be one of the ministers of Elizabeth, transplanted at once to a state of society widely different from that in which the abilities of such ministers had been serviceable. In the sixteenth century, the Royal prerogative had scarcely been called in question. A Minister who held it high was in no danger, so long as he used it well. That attachment to the Crown, that extreme jealousy of popular encroachments, that love, half religious half political, for the Church, which, from the beginning of the second session of the Long Parliament, showed itself in Clarendon, and which his sufferings, his long residence in France, and his high station in the government, served to strengthen, would, a hundred years earlier, have secured to him the favour of his sovereign without rendering him odious to the people. His probity, his correctness in private life, his decency of deportment, and his general ability, would not have misbecome a colleague of Walsingham and Burleigh. But, in the times on which he was cast, his errors and his virtues were alike out of place. He imprisoned men without trial. He was accused of raising unlawful contributions on the people for the support of the army. The abolition of the act which ensured the frequent holding of Parliaments was one of his favourite objects. He seems to have meditated the revival of the Star Chamber and the High Commission Court. His zeal for the prerogative made him unpopular; but it could not secure to him the favour of a master far more desirous of ease and pleasure than of power. Charles would rather have lived in exile and privacy, with abundance of money, a crowd of mimics to amuse him, and a score of mistresses, than have purchased the absolute dominion of the world by the privations and exertions to which Clarendon was constantly urging him. A councillor who was always bringing him papers and giving

[1] See p. 33.

him advice, and who stoutly refused to compliment Lady Castlemaine[1] and to carry messages to Mistress Stewart,[2] soon became more hateful to him than ever Cromwell had been. Thus, considered by the people as an oppressor, by the Court as a censor, the Minister fell from his high office with a ruin more violent and destructive than could ever have been his fate, if he had either respected the principles of the Constitution or flattered the vices of the King.

Mr. Hallam has formed, we think, a most correct estimate of the character and administration of Clarendon. But he scarcely makes a sufficient allowance for the wear and tear which honesty almost necessarily sustains in the friction of political life, and which, in times so rough as those through which Clarendon passed, must be very considerable. When these are fairly estimated, we think that his integrity may be allowed to pass muster. A high-minded man he certainly was not, either in public or in private affairs. His own account of his conduct in the affair of his daughter is the most extraordinary passage in autobiography.[3] We except nothing even in the Confessions of Rousseau. Several writers have taken a perverted and absurd pride in representing themselves as detestable; but no other ever laboured hard to make himself despicable and ridiculous. In one important particular Clarendon showed as little regard to the honour of his country as he had shown to that of his family. He accepted a subsidy from France for the relief of Portugal. But this method of obtaining money was afterwards practised to a much greater extent and for objects much less respectable, both by the Court and by the Opposition.

These pecuniary transactions are commonly considered as the most disgraceful part of the history of those times; and they were no doubt highly reprehensible. Yet, in justice to the Whigs and to Charles himself, we must admit that they were not so shameful or atrocious as at the present day they appear.

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[1] Barbara Villiers, 1641-1709, married to Roger Palmer, afterwards created Earl of Castlemaine, and a mistress of Charles II.

[2] Frances Teresa Stewart, 1648-1702, afterwards Duchess of Richmond, the fair Stewart of Grammont's *Memoirs*.

[3] Clarendon, having discovered that his daughter Anne was with child by James, Duke of York, brother to Charles II., and having some reason to think that they had been privately married, earnestly besought the King that she might be cast into a dungeon and a bill brought into Parliament for cutting off her head. Such language might be thought abject flattery were it not reported by the man who used it, who would not be likely to perpetuate his baseness. It must pass for a flight of romantic reverence for royal blood, unusual in middle-aged men of affairs. See *Life of Clarendon* by himself, vol. i., p. 374 *et seq.* (Oxford edition, 1829).

The effect of violent animosities between parties has always been an indifference to the general welfare and honour of the State. A politician, where factions run high, is interested not for the whole people, but for his own section of it. The rest are, in his view, strangers, enemies, or rather pirates. The strongest aversion which he can feel to any foreign power is the ardour of friendship, when compared with the loathing which he entertains towards those domestic foes with whom he is cooped up in a narrow space, with whom he lives in a constant interchange of petty injuries and insults, and from whom, in the day of their success, he has to expect severities far beyond any that a conqueror from a distant country would inflict. Thus, in Greece, it was a point of honour for a man to cleave to his party against his country. No aristocratical citizen of Samos or Corcyra would have hesitated to call in the aid of Lacedæmon. The multitude, on the contrary, looked every where to Athens. In the Italian states of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, from the same cause, no man was so much a Pisan or a Florentine as a Ghibeline or a Guelf. It may be doubted whether there was a single individual who would have scrupled to raise his party from a state of depression, by opening the gates of his native city to a French or an Arragonese force.[1] The Reformation, dividing almost every European country into two parts, produced similar effects. The Catholic was too strong for the Englishman, the Huguenot for the Frenchman. The Protestant statesmen of Scotland and France called in the aid of Elizabeth; and the Papists of the League brought a Spanish army into the very heart of France. The commotions to which the French Revolution gave rise were followed by the same consequences. The Republicans in every part of Europe were eager to see the armies of the National Convention and the Directory appear among them, and exulted in defeats which distressed and humbled those whom they considered as their worst enemies, their own rulers. The princes and nobles of France, on the other hand, did their utmost to bring foreign invaders to Paris. A very short time has elapsed since the Apostolical party in Spain invoked, too successfully, the support of strangers.[2]

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[1] In the year 1266 Charles of Anjou, brother of Louis IX. of France, conquered the kingdom of the two Sicilies. In the year 1282 the island of Sicily threw off his yoke and put itself under the protection of Peter III., King of Arragon. Thus a branch of the French royal line was established at Naples and a branch of the Arragonese royal line in Sicily, and the door was opened for the frequent interference of these powers in Italian politics.

[2] See p. 36.

The great contest which raged in England during the seventeenth century extinguished, not indeed in the body of the people, but in those classes which were most actively engaged in politics, almost all national feelings. Charles the Second and many of his courtiers had passed a large part of their lives in banishment, living on the bounty of foreign treasuries, soliciting foreign aid to re-establish monarchy in their native country. The King's own brother had fought in Flanders, under the banners of Spain, against the English armies. The oppressed Cavaliers in England constantly looked to the Louvre and the Escurial for deliverance and revenge. Clarendon censures the continental governments with great bitterness for not interfering in our internal dissensions. It is not strange, therefore, that, amidst the furious contests which followed the Restoration, the violence of party feeling should produce effects which would probably have attended it even in an age less distinguished by laxity of principle and indelicacy of sentiment. It was not till a natural death had terminated the paralytic old age of the Jacobite party that the evil was completely at an end. The Whigs long looked to Holland, the High Tories to France. The former concluded the Barrier Treaty;[1] the latter entreated the Court of Versailles to send an expedition to England. Many men, who, however erroneous their political notions might be, were unquestionably honourable in private life, accepted money without scruple from the foreign powers favourable to the Pretender.

Never was there less of national feeling among the higher orders than during the reign of Charles the Second. That Prince, on the one side, thought it better to be the deputy of an absolute king than the King of a free people. Algernon Sydney,[2] on the other hand, would gladly have aided France in all her ambitious schemes, and have seen England reduced to the condition of a province, in the wild hope that a foreign despot would assist him to establish his darling republic. The

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[1] The treaty made between England and Holland in 1709 by which England bound herself to procure all the important towns of the Spanish Netherlands to be put into Dutch keeping, to serve the republic as a barrier against France.

[2] Algernon Sidney, 1622-1682, fought against Charles I., entered Parliament in 1646 and became a member of the Council of State in the Commonwealth time. After a long exile he returned to England in 1677. Although not in Parliament he was conspicuous in opposition to the court. As Louis XIV. was anxious to keep Charles II. helpless he encouraged the opposition, and the French ambassador once gave Sidney 1,000 guineas for his services. Yet Sidney was a convinced Republican and a patriot. After the overthrow of the Whigs he was found guilty of treason and beheaded.

King took the money of France to assist him in the enterprise which he meditated against the liberty of his subjects, with as little scruple as Frederic of Prussia or Alexander of Russia accepted our subsidies in time of war. The leaders of the Opposition no more thought themselves disgraced by the presents of Louis, than a gentleman of our own time thinks himself disgraced by the liberality of powerful and wealthy members of his party who pay his election bill. The money which the King received from France had been largely employed to corrupt members of Parliament. The enemies of the court might think it fair, or even absolutely necessary, to encounter bribery with bribery. Thus they took the French gratuities, the needy among them for their own use, the rich probably for the general purposes of the party, without any scruple. If we compare their conduct not with that of English statesmen in our own time, but with that of persons in those foreign countries which are now situated as England then was, we shall probably see reason to abate something of the severity of censure with which it has been the fashion to visit those proceedings. Yet when every allowance is made, the transaction is sufficiently offensive. It is satisfactory to find that Lord Russell[1] stands free from any imputation of personal participation in the spoil. An age so miserably poor in all the moral qualities which render public characters respectable can ill spare the credit which it derives from a man, not indeed conspicuous for talents or knowledge, but honest even in his errors, respectable in every relation of life, rationally pious, steadily and placidly brave.

The great improvement which took place in our breed of public men is principally to be ascribed to the Revolution. Yet that memorable event, in a great measure, took its character from the very vices which it was the means of reforming. It was assuredly a happy revolution, and a useful revolution; but it was not, what it has often been called, a glorious revolution. William, and William alone, derived glory from it. The transaction was, in almost every part, discreditable to England. That a tyrant who had violated the fundamental laws of the country, who had attacked the rights of its greatest corporations, who had begun to persecute the established religion of the state, who had never respected the law either in his superstition or in his revenge, could not be pulled down without the aid of a foreign army, is a circumstance not very grateful to our national pride. Yet this is the least degrading part of the story. The shameless insincerity of the great and noble, the warm assurances of general support which James received, down to the moment of general desertion, indicate a meanness of spirit and a looseness of morality most disgraceful to the age. That the enterprise succeeded, at least that it succeeded without bloodshed or commotion, was principally owing to an act of ungrateful perfidy, such as no soldier had ever before committed, and to those monstrous fictions respecting the birth of the Prince of Wales which persons of the highest rank were not ashamed to circulate.[1] In all the proceedings of the convention, in the conference particularly, we see that littleness of mind which is the chief characteristic of the times. The resolutions on which the two Houses at last agreed were as bad as any resolutions for so excellent a purpose could be. Their feeble and contradictory language was evidently intended to save the credit of the Tories, who were ashamed to name what they were not ashamed to do.[2] Through the whole transaction no commanding talents were displayed by any Englishman; no extraordinary risks were run; no sacrifices were made for the deliverance of the nation, except the sacrifice which Churchill made of honour, and Anne of natural affection.

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[1] William, Lord Russell, 1639-1683, entered Parliament in 1661 and came forward in 1674 as a leader of the country party. He was completely carried away by the story of the Popish Plot, and one of the foremost in trying to exclude James, Duke of York, from the throne. After the overthrow of the Whig party he was condemned as a traitor and executed.

It was in some sense fortunate, as we have already said, for the Church of England, that the Reformation in this country was effected by men who cared little about religion. And, in the same manner, it was fortunate for our civil government that the Revolution was in a great measure effected by men who cared little about their political principles. At such a crisis, splendid talents and strong passions might have done more harm than good. There was far greater reason to fear that too much would be attempted, and that violent movements would produce an equally violent reaction, than that too little would be done in the way of change. But narrowness of intellect, and flexibility of principle, though they may be serviceable, can never be respectable.

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[1] A rumour was spread that the son born to James in June, 1688 (afterwards the Old Pretender), was not his son, but a child smuggled into the palace in pursuance of a Roman Catholic plot to supplant Princess Mary of Orange, the true heir, who was a zealous Protestant. The child was supposed to have been brought in a warming-pan. So in Scott's *Rob Roy* Clerk Jobson styles King William our glorious deliverer from wooden shoes and warming-pans.

[2] In the *History of England* Macaulay passed a very different judgment on the proceedings of the Convention.

If in the Revolution itself, there was little that can properly be called glorious, there was still less in the events which followed. In a church which had as one man declared the doctrine of resistance unchristian, only four hundred persons refused to take the oath of allegiance to a government founded on resistance. In the preceding generation, both the Episcopal and the Presbyterian clergy, rather than concede points of conscience not more important, had resigned their livings by thousands.

The churchmen, at the time of the Revolution, justified their conduct by all those profligate sophisms which are called Jesuitical, and which are commonly reckoned among the peculiar sins of Popery, but which, in fact, are every where the anodynes employed by minds rather subtle than strong, to quiet those internal twinges which they cannot but feel and which they will not obey. As the oath taken by the clergy was in the teeth of their principles, so was their conduct in the teeth of their oath. Their constant machinations against the Government to which they had sworn fidelity brought a reproach on their order and on Christianity itself. A distinguished prelate has not scrupled to say that the rapid increase of infidelity at that time was principally produced by the disgust which the faithless conduct of his brethren excited in men not sufficiently candid or judicious to discern the beauties of the system amidst the vices of its ministers.

But the reproach was not confined to the Church. In every political party, in the Cabinet itself, duplicity and perfidy abounded. The very men whom William loaded with benefits and in whom he reposed most confidence, with his seals of office in their hands, kept up a correspondence with the exiled family. Orford, Leeds, and Shrewsbury were guilty of this odious treachery. Even Devonshire is not altogether free from suspicion. It may well be conceived that, at such a time, such a nature as that of Marlborough would riot in the very luxury of baseness. His former treason, thoroughly furnished with all that makes infamy exquisite, placed him under the disadvantage which attends every artist from the time that he produces a masterpiece. Yet his second great stroke may excite wonder, even in those who appreciate all the merit of the first. Lest his admirers should be able to say that at the time of the Revolution he had betrayed his King from any other than selfish motives, he proceeded to betray his country. He sent intelligence to the French court of a secret expedition intended to attack Brest. The consequence was that the expedition failed, and that eight hundred British soldiers lost their lives from the abandoned villany of a British general. Yet this man has been canonized by so many eminent writers that to speak of him as he deserves may seem scarcely decent.[1]

The reign of William the Third, as Mr. Hallam happily says, was the Nadir of the national prosperity. It was also the Nadir of the national character. It was the time when the rank harvest of vices sown during thirty years of licentiousness and confusion was gathered in; but it was also the seed-time of great virtues.

The press was emancipated from the censorship soon after the Revolution; and the Government immediately fell under the censorship of the press. Statesmen had a scrutiny to endure which was every day becoming more and more severe. The extreme violence of opinions abated. The Whigs learned moderation in office; the Tories learned the principles of liberty in opposition. The parties almost constantly approximated, often met, sometimes crossed each other. There were occasional bursts of violence; but, from the time of the Revolution, those bursts were constantly becoming less and less terrible. The severity with which the Tories, at the close of the reign of Anne, treated some of those who had directed the public affairs during the war of the Grand Alliance, and the retaliatory measures of the Whigs, after the accession of the House of Hanover, cannot be justified; but they were by no means in the style of the infuriated parties, whose alternate murders had disgraced our history towards the close of the reign of Charles the Second. At the fall of Walpole far greater moderation was displayed. And from that time it has been the practice, a practice not strictly according to the theory of our Constitution, but still most salutary, to consider the loss of office, and the public disapprobation, as punishments sufficient for errors in the administration not imputable to personal corruption. Nothing, we believe, has contributed more than this lenity to raise the character of public men. Ambition is of itself a game sufficiently hazardous and sufficiently deep to inflame the passions without adding property, life, and liberty to the stake. Where the play runs so desperately high as in the seventeenth century, honour is at an end. Statesmen instead of being, as they should be, at once mild and steady, are at once ferocious and inconsistent. The axe is for ever before their eyes. A popular outcry sometimes unnerves them, and sometimes makes them desperate; it drives them to unworthy compliances, or to measures of vengeance as cruel as those which they have reason to expect. A Minister in our times need not fear either to be firm or to be merciful. Our old policy in this respect was as absurd as that of the king in the Eastern tale who proclaimed that any physician who pleased might come to court and prescribe for his diseases, but that if the remedies failed the adventurer should lose his head. It is easy to conceive how many able men would refuse to undertake the cure on such conditions; how much the sense of extreme danger would confuse the perceptions, and cloud the intellect of the practitioner, at the very crisis which most called for self-possession, and how strong his temptation would be, if he found that he had committed a blunder, to escape the consequences of it by poisoning his patient.

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[1] These invectives are repeated in several passages of the *History of England.* They overshoot the mark. Several of those who corresponded with the exiled King seem to have served William faithfully, and their treason was merely an endeavour to escape the penalties of treason if James were restored. Even with regard to the expedition against Brest it would appear that Marlborough only told the French what they knew before.

But in fact it would have been impossible, since the Revolution, to punish any Minister for the general course of his policy, with the slightest semblance of justice; for since that time no Minister has been able to pursue any general course of policy without the approbation of the Parliament. The most important effects of that great change were, as Mr. Hallam has most truly said, and most ably shown, those which it indirectly produced. Thenceforward it became the interest of the executive government to protect those very doctrines which an executive government is in general inclined to persecute. The sovereign, the ministers, the courtiers, at last even the universities and the clergy, were changed into advocates of the right of resistance. In the theory of the Whigs, in the situation of the Tories, in the common interest of all public men, the Parliamentary constitution of the country found perfect security. The power of the House of Commons, in particular, has been steadily on the increase. Since supplies have been granted for short terms and appropriated to particular services, the approbation of that House has been as necessary in practice to the executive administration as it has always been in theory to taxes and to laws.

Mr. Hallam appears to have begun with the reign of Henry the Seventh, as the period at which what is called modern history, in contradistinction to the history of the middle ages, is generally supposed to commence. He has stopped at the accession of George the Third, "from unwillingness," as he says, "to excite the prejudices of modern politics, especially those connected with personal character."[1] These two eras, we think, deserved the distinction on other grounds. Our remote posterity, when looking back on our history in that comprehensive manner in which remote posterity alone can, without much danger of error, look back on it, will probably observe those points with peculiar interest. They are, if we mistake not, the beginning and the end of an entire and separate chapter in our annals. The period which lies between them is a perfect cycle, a great year of the public mind.

In the reign of Henry the Seventh, all the political differences which had agitated England since the Norman conquest seemed to be set at rest. The long and fierce struggle between the Crown and the Barons had terminated. The grievances which had produced the rebellions of Tyler and Cade had disappeared. Villanage was scarcely known. The two royal houses, whose conflicting claims had long convulsed the kingdom, were at length united. The claimants whose pretensions, just or unjust, had disturbed the new settlement, were overthrown. In religion there was no open dissent, and probably very little secret heresy. The old subjects of contention, in short, had vanished; those which were to succeed had not yet appeared.

Soon, however, new principles were announced; principles which were destined to keep England during two centuries and a half in a state of commotion. The Reformation divided the people into two great parties. The Protestants were victorious. They again subdivided themselves. Political factions were engrafted on theological sects. The mutual animosities of the two parties gradually emerged into the light of public life. First came conflicts in Parliament; then civil war; then revolutions upon revolutions, each attended by its appurtenance of proscriptions, and persecutions, and tests; each followed by severe measures on the part of the conquerors; each exciting a deadly and festering hatred in the conquered. During the reign of George the Second, things were evidently tending to repose. At the close of that reign, the nation had completed the great revolution which commenced in the early part of the sixteenth century, and was again at rest. The fury of sects had died away. The Catholics themselves practically enjoyed toleration; and more than toleration they did not yet venture even to desire. Jacobitism was a mere name. Nobody was left to fight for that wretched cause, and very few to drink for it. The Constitution, purchased so dearly, was on every side extolled and worshipped. Even those distinctions of party which must almost always be found in a free state could scarcely be traced. The two great bodies which, from the time of the Revolution, had been gradually tending to approximation, were now united in emulous support of that splendid Administration which smote to the dust both the branches of the House of Bourbon.[1] The great battle for our ecclesiastical and civil polity had been fought and won. The wounds had been healed. The victors and the vanquished were rejoicing together. Every person acquainted with the political writers of the last generation will recollect the terms in which they generally speak of that time. It was a glimpse of a golden age of union and glory, a short interval of rest, which had been preceded by centuries of agitation, and which centuries of agitation were destined to follow.

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[1] *Constitutional History*, Preface.

How soon faction again began to ferment is well known. In the Letters of Junius, in Burke's Thoughts on the Cause of the Discontents, and in many other writings of less merit, the violent dissensions which speedily convulsed the country are imputed to the system of favouritism which George the Third introduced, to the influence of Bute, or to the profligacy of those who called themselves the King's friends. With all deference to the eminent writers to whom we have referred, we may venture to say that they lived too near the events of which they treated to judge correctly. The schism which was then appearing in the nation, and which has been from that time almost constantly widening, had little in common with those schisms which had divided it during the reigns of the Tudors and the Stuarts. The symptoms of popular feeling, indeed, will always be in a great measure the same; but the principle which excited that feeling was here new. The support which was given to Wilkes, the clamour for reform during the American war, the disaffected conduct of large classes of people at the time of the French Revolution, no more resembled the opposition which had been offered to the government of Charles the Second, than that opposition resembled the contest between the Roses.

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[1] The Administration of Pitt and Newcastle, 1757-1761.

In the political as in the natural body, a sensation is often referred to a part widely different from that in which it really resides. A man whose leg is cut off fancies that he feels a pain in his toe. And in the same manner the people, in the earlier part of the late reign, sincerely attributed their discontent to grievances which had been effectually lopped off. They imagined that the prerogative was too strong for the Constitution, that the principles of the Revolution were abandoned, that the system of the Stuarts was restored. Every impartial man must now acknowledge that these charges were groundless. The conduct of the Government with respect to the Middlesex election would have been contemplated with delight by the first generation of Whigs.[1] They would have thought it a splendid triumph of the cause of liberty that the King and the Lords should resign to the lower House a portion of the legislative power, and allow it to incapacitate without their consent. This, indeed, Mr. Burke clearly perceived. "When the House of Commons," says he, "in an endeavour to obtain new advantages at the expense of the other orders of the state, for the benefit of the commons at large, have pursued strong measures, if it were not just, it was at least natural, that the constituents should connive at all their proceedings; because we ourselves were ultimately to profit. But when this submission is urged to us in a contest between the representatives and ourselves, and where nothing can be put into their scale which is not taken from ours, they fancy us to be children when they tell us that they are our representatives, our own flesh and blood, and that all the stripes they give us are for our good."[2] These sentences contain, in fact, the whole explanation of the mystery. The conflict of the seventeenth century was maintained by the Parliament against the Crown. The conflict which commenced in the middle of the eighteenth century, which still remains undecided, and in which our children and grandchildren will probably be called to act or to suffer, is between a large portion of the people on the one side, and the Crown and the Parliament united on the other.

The privileges of the House of Commons, those privileges which, in 1642, all London rose in arms to defend, which the people considered as synonymous with their own liberties, and in comparison of which they took no account of the most precious and sacred principles of English jurisprudence, have now become nearly as odious as the rigours of martial law. That power of committing which the people anciently loved to see the House of Commons exercise, is now, at least when employed against libellers, the most unpopular power in the Constitution. If the Commons were to suffer the Lords to amend money-bills, we do not believe that the people would care one straw about the matter. If they were to suffer the Lords even to originate money-bills, we doubt whether such a surrender of their constitutional rights would excite half so much dissatisfaction as the exclusion of strangers from a single important discussion. The gallery in which the reporters sit has become a fourth estate of the realm.[1] The publication of the debates, a practice which seemed to the most liberal statesmen of the old school full of danger to the great safeguards of public liberty, is now regarded by many persons as a safeguard tantamount, and more than tantamount, to all the rest together.

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[1] When it induced the House of Commons in 1769 not merely to expel Wilkes, who had been duly elected a member for the county of Middlesex, but to declare him incapacitated and his opponent, Colonel Luttrel, duly elected.

[2] *Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents.*

Burke, in a speech on parliamentary reform which is the more remarkable because it was delivered long before the French Revolution, has described, in striking language, the change in public feeling of which we speak. "It suggests melancholy reflections," says he, "in consequence of the strange course we have long held, that we are now no longer quarrelling about the character, or about the conduct of men, or the tenor of measures; but we are grown out of humour with the English Constitution itself; this is become the object of the animosity of Englishmen. This constitution in former days used to be the envy of the world; it was the pattern for politicians; the theme of the eloquent; the meditation of the philosopher in every part of the world. As to Englishmen, it was their pride, their consolation. By it they lived, and for it they were ready to die. Its defects, if it had any, were partly covered by partiality, and partly borne by prudence. Now all its excellencies are forgot, its faults are forcibly dragged into day, exaggerated by every artifice of misrepresentation. It is despised and rejected of men; and every device and invention of ingenuity or idleness is set up in opposition, or in preference to it."[2] We neither adopt nor condemn the language of reprobation which the great orator here employs. We call him only as a witness to the fact. That the revolution of public feeling which he described was then in progress is indisputable; and it is equally indisputable, we think, that it is in progress still.

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[1] Is this the earliest use of the now familiar phrase?

[2] Speech on a motion made in the House of Commons on the 7th of May, 1782, for a committee to inquire into the state of the representation of the Commons in Parliament.

To investigate and classify the causes of so great a change would require far more thought, and far more space, than we at present have to bestow. But some of them are obvious. During the contest which the Parliament carried on against the Stuarts, it had only to check and complain. It has since had to govern. As an attacking body, it could select its points of attack, and it naturally chose those on which it was likely to receive public support. As a ruling body, it has neither the same liberty of choice, nor the same motives to gratify the people. With the power of an executive government, it has drawn to itself some of the vices, and all the unpopularity of an executive government. On the House of Commons above all, possessed as it is of the public purse, and consequently of the public sword, the nation throws all the blame of an ill conducted war, of a blundering negotiation, of a disgraceful treaty, of an embarrassing commercial crisis. The delays of the Court of Chancery, the misconduct of a judge at Van Diemen's Land, any thing, in short, which in any part of the administration any person feels as a grievance, is attributed to the tyranny, or at least to the negligence, of that all-powerful body. Private individuals pester it with their wrongs and claims. A merchant appeals to it from the Courts of Rio Janeiro or St. Petersburg. A historical painter complains to it that his department of art finds no encouragement. Anciently the Parliament resembled a member of opposition, from whom no places are expected, who is not expected to confer favours and propose measures, but merely to watch and censure, and who may, therefore, unless he is grossly injudicious, be popular with the great body of the community. The Parliament now resembles the same person put into office, surrounded by petitioners whom twenty times his patronage would not satisfy, stunned with complaints, buried in memorials, compelled by the duties of his station to bring forward measures similar to those which he was formerly accustomed to observe and to check, and perpetually encountered by objections similar to those which it was formerly his business to raise.

Perhaps it may be laid down as a general rule that a legislative assembly, not constituted on democratical principles, cannot be popular long after it ceases to be weak. Its zeal for what the people, rightly or wrongly, conceive to be their interests, its sympathy with their mutable and violent passions, are merely the effects of the particular circumstances in which it is placed. As long as it depends for existence on the public favour, it will employ all the means in its power to conciliate that favour. While this is the case, defects in its constitution are of little consequence. But, as the close union of such a body with the nation is the effect of an identity of interests not essential but accidental, it is in some measure dissolved from the time at which the danger which produced it ceases to exist.

Hence, before the Revolution, the question of Parliamentary reform was of very little importance. The friends of liberty had no very ardent wish for reform. The strongest Tories saw no objections to it. It is remarkable that Clarendon loudly applauds the changes which Cromwell introduced, changes far stronger than the Whigs of the present day would in general approve. There is no reason to think, however, that the reform effected by Cromwell made any great difference in the conduct of the Parliament. Indeed, if the House of Commons had, during the reign of Charles the Second, been elected by universal suffrage, or if all the seats had been put up to sale, as in the French Parliaments,[1] it would, we suspect, have acted very much as it did. We know how strongly the Parliament of Paris exerted itself in favour of the people on many important occasions; and the reason is evident. Though it did not emanate from the people, its whole consequence depended on the support of the people.

From the time of the Revolution the House of Commons has been gradually becoming what it now is, a great council of state, containing many members chosen freely by the people, and many others anxious to acquire the favour of the people; but, on the whole, aristocratical in its temper and interest. It is very far from being an illiberal and stupid oligarchy; but it is equally far from being an express image of the general feeling. It is influenced by the opinion of the people, and influenced powerfully, but slowly and circuitously. Instead of outrunning the public mind, as before the Revolution it frequently did, it now follows with slow steps and at a wide distance. It is therefore necessarily unpopular; and the more so because the good which it produces is much less evident to common perception than the evil which it inflicts. It bears the blame of all the mischief which is done, or supposed to be done, by its authority or by its connivance. It does not get the credit, on the other hand, of having prevented those innumerable abuses which do not exist solely because the House of Commons exists.

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[1] In the courts of justice so entitled the judges bought their places which they held for life. This usage has been palliated as giving the judges a better security of tenure than they could otherwise have enjoyed under a despotic monarchy.

A large part of the nation is certainly desirous of a reform in the representative system. How large that part may be, and how strong its desires on the subject may be, it is difficult to say. It is only at intervals that the clamour on the subject is loud and vehement. But it seems to us that, during the remissions, the feeling gathers strength, and that every successive burst is more violent than that which preceded it. The public attention may be for a time diverted to the Catholic claims or the Mercantile code; but it is probable that at no very distant period, perhaps in the lifetime of the present generation, all other questions will merge in that which is, in a certain degree, connected with them all.

Already we seem to ourselves to perceive the signs of unquiet times, the vague presentiment of something great and strange which pervades the community, the restless and turbid hopes of those who have every thing to gain, the dimly hinted forebodings of those who have every thing to lose. Many indications might be mentioned, in themselves indeed as insignificant as straws; but even the direction of a straw, to borrow the illustration of Bacon, will show from what quarter the storm is setting in.

A great statesman might, by judicious and timely reformations, by reconciling the two great branches of the natural aristocracy, the capitalists and the landowners, and by so widening the base of the government as to interest in its defence the whole of the middle class, that brave, honest, and sound-hearted class, which is as anxious for the maintenance of order and the security of property, as it is hostile to corruption and oppression, succeed in averting a struggle to which no rational friend of liberty or of law can look forward without great apprehensions. There are those who will be contented with nothing but demolition; and there are those who shrink from all repair. There are innovators who long for a President and a National Convention; and there are bigots who, while cities larger and richer than the capitals of many great kingdoms are calling out for representatives to watch over their interests, select some hackneyed jobber in boroughs, some peer of the narrowest and smallest mind, as the fittest depositary of a forfeited franchise. Between these extremes there lies a more excellent way. Time is bringing round another crisis analogous to that which occurred in the seventeenth century. We stand in a situation similar to that in which our ancestors stood under the reign of James the First. It will soon again be necessary to reform that we may preserve, to save the fundamental principles of the Constitution by alterations in the subordinate parts. It will then be possible, as it was possible two hundred years ago, to protect vested rights, to secure every useful institution, every institution endeared by antiquity and noble associations, and, at the same time, to introduce into the system improvements harmonizing with the original plan. It remains to be seen whether two hundred years have made us wiser.

We know of no great revolution which might not have been prevented by compromise early and graciously made. Firmness is a great virtue in public affairs; but it has its proper sphere. Conspiracies and insurrections in which small minorities are engaged, the outbreakings of popular violence unconnected with any extensive project or any durable principle, are best repressed by vigour and decision. To shrink from them is to make them formidable. But no wise ruler will confound the pervading taint with the slight local irritation. No wise ruler will treat the deeply seated discontents of a great party, as he treats the fury of a mob which destroys mills and power-looms. The neglect of this distinction has been fatal even to governments strong in the power of the sword. The present time is indeed a time of peace and order. But it is at such a time that fools are most thoughtless and wise men most thoughtful. That the discontents which have agitated the country during the late and the present reign, and which, though not always noisy, are never wholly dormant, will again break forth with aggravated symptoms, is almost as certain as that the tides and seasons will follow their appointed course. But in all movements of the human mind which tend to great revolutions there is a crisis at which moderate concession may amend, conciliate, and preserve. Happy will it be for England if, at that crisis, her interests be confided to men for whom history has not recorded the long series of human crimes and follies in vain.

SOUTHEY'S COLLOQUIES

JANUARY, 1830

NOTE ON THE ESSAY

SOUTHEY'S *Colloquies on Society* would by this time have been forgotten but for the following review. They are a curious medley. They treat, as Macaulay remarks, of "trade, currency, Catholic emancipation, periodical literature, female nunneries, butchers, snuff, bookstalls, and a hundred other subjects." They are an assemblage of the remnants of the reading and reflection of a most industrious man of letters. Their faults are fully exposed by the reviewer. Southey was not a philosopher nor a real master of any one subject, and acknowledged himself that he could never understand political economy. Amiable and high-minded in private life, in public affairs he took narrow views and clung to them with all the intolerance of terror excited by the French Revolution. Yet the *Colloquies* are not a dreary book. As Macaulay owned, Southey's style is so good that even when he writes nonsense we generally read him with pleasure. Some of the little sketches of scenery which diversify the argument are singularly pretty. But what chiefly entitles the *Colloquies* to some regard is that they contain one of the earliest protests against the ugly and inhuman aspect of modern industry. Southey anticipated Carlyle, Disraeli and Ruskin in their invective against the all-absorbing commercial spirit. Southey was one of the first to complain of the excessive importance attached to mere production, and to call for an improvement in the condition of the producers. He urged that the health and character of the people were the principal riches of the community and that the State should interfere to educate those who would otherwise go without education. If he assailed the manufacturing system blindly and without being able to make many practical suggestions for its amendment, nobody will now deny that it was then full of gross abuses and tended to impair the vigour of the population. Amid all his bigotry and bad logic the attentive reader will find many remarks which show both tenderness and elevation of mind. These a calmer and more comprehensive critic might have picked out and placed in a clearer light, but he would not have written so lively and amusing a review as Macaulay's.

In knowledge, in power of reasoning, and in acquaintance with history and political economy, Macaulay had a great advantage over Southey. Macaulay's good sense and wide reading informed him that an age of gold never had existed, although they might not prevent him from overstating the merits of the age in which he lived. The love of country life and dislike of towns expressed by the Lake School seemed to him literary affectation, and the unquestionable ugliness of the age of machinery caused him no discomfort. He was of a bold, sanguine temperament which instinctively turned to the best aspects of modern life, and he belonged to a party which had its strongholds in the great manufacturing towns, and its most active friends among the manufacturers. The views here expressed by Macaulay as to the proper sphere of State action may be compared with what is said in the essays on Frederic the Great and on Gladstone's *Church and State*, written in the maturity of his judgment. He expresses the orthodox liberal doctrine of that time which had come down from Adam Smith and the physiocrats. He believes that the individual can usually provide for his own wants better than the State could do and that the presumption is usually against the interference of the Government. But here again his good sense and historical knowledge save him from the exaggerations of certain advocates of liberty. Instead of confining the government absolutely to the work of maintaining order and repelling attack from without, he is content to let experience decide what it can do well and without hindrance to its paramount duties. In the speech which he made in 1846 in favour of the Ten Hours' Bill he frankly approved the interference of the legislature to protect those who by age or sex are rendered unable to protect themselves, in language which most reasonable persons would accept at the present day.

SOUTHEY'S COLLOQUIES

Sir Thomas More; or, Colloquies on the Progress and Prospects of Society. By Robert Southey, Esq. LL.D., Poet Laureate. 2 vols. 8vo. London: 1829.

IT would be scarcely possible for a man of Mr. Southey's talents and acquirements to write two volumes so large as those before us, which should be wholly destitute of information and amusement. Yet we do not remember to have read with so little satisfaction any equal quantity of matter, written by any man of real abilities. We have, for some time past, observed with great regret the strange infatuation which leads the Poet Laureate to abandon those departments of literature in which he might excel, and to lecture the public on sciences of which he has still the very alphabet to learn. He has now, we think, done his worst. The subject which he has at last undertaken to treat is one which demands all the highest intellectual and moral qualities of a philosophical statesman, an understanding at once comprehensive and acute, a heart at once upright and charitable. Mr. Southey brings to the task two faculties which were never, we believe, vouchsafed in measure so copious to any human being, the faculty of believing without a reason, and the faculty of hating without a provocation.

It is, indeed, most extraordinary, that a mind like Mr. Southey's, a mind richly endowed in many respects by nature, and highly cultivated by study, a mind which has exercised considerable influence on the most enlightened generation of the most enlightened people that ever existed, should be utterly destitute of the power of discerning truth from falsehood. Yet such is the fact. Government is to Mr. Southey one of the fine arts. He judges of a theory, of a public measure, of a religion or a political party, of a peace or a war, as men judge of a picture or a statue, by the effect produced on his imagination. A chain of associations is to him what a chain of reasoning is to other men; and what he calls his opinions are in fact merely his tastes.

Part of this description might perhaps apply to a much greater man, Mr. Burke. But Mr. Burke assuredly possessed an understanding admirably fitted for the investigation of truth, an understanding stronger than that of any statesman, active or speculative, of the eighteenth century, stronger than every thing, except his own fierce and ungovernable sensibility. Hence he generally chose his side like a fanatic, and defended it like a philosopher. His conduct on the most important occasions of his life, at the time of the impeachment of Hastings for example, and at the time of the French Revolution, seems to have been prompted by those feelings and motives which Mr. Coleridge has so happily described,

> "Stormy pity, and the cherish'd lure
> Of pomp, and proud precipitance of soul."[1]

Hindostan, with its vast cities, its gorgeous pagodas, its infinite swarms of dusky population, its long-descended dynasties, its stately etiquette, excited in a mind so capacious, so imaginative, and so susceptible, the most intense interest. The peculiarities of the costume, of the manners, and of the laws, the very mystery which hung over the language and origin of the people, seized his imagination. To plead under the ancient arches of Westminster Hall, in the name of the English people, at the bar of the English nobles, for great nations and kings separated from him by half the world, seemed to him the height of human glory. Again, it is not difficult to perceive that his hostility to the French Revolution principally arose from the vexation which he felt at having all his old political associations disturbed, at seeing the well known landmarks of states obliterated, and the names and distinctions with which the history of Europe had been filled for ages at once swept away. He felt like an antiquary whose shield had been scoured, or a connoisseur who found his Titian retouched. But, however he came by an opinion, he had no sooner got it than he did his best to make out a legitimate title to it. His reason, like a spirit in the service of an enchanter, though spell-bound, was still mighty. It did whatever work his passions and his imagination might impose. But it did that work, however arduous, with marvellous dexterity and vigour. His course was not determined by argument; but he could defend the wildest course by arguments more plausible than those by which common men support opinions which they have adopted after the fullest deliberation. Reason has scarcely ever displayed, even in those well constituted minds of which she occupies the throne, so much power and energy as in the lowest offices of that imperial servitude.

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[1] "Yet never, Burke, thou drank'st Corruption's bowl,
Thee stormy Pity and the cherish'd lure
Of Pomp and proud Precipitance of soul
Wildered with meteor fires."

—COLERIDGE, sonnet ii.

Now in the mind of Mr. Southey reason has no place at all, as either leader or follower, as either sovereign or slave. He does not seem to know what an argument is. He never uses arguments himself. He never troubles himself to answer the arguments of his opponents. It has never occurred to him, that a man ought to be able to give some better account of the way in which he has arrived at his opinions than merely that it is his will and pleasure to hold them. It has never occurred to him that there is a difference between assertion and demonstration, that a rumour does not always prove a fact, that a single fact, when proved, is hardly foundation enough for a theory, that two contradictory propositions cannot be undeniable truths, that to beg the question is not the way to settle it, or that when an objection is raised, it ought to be met with something more convincing than "scoundrel" and "blockhead."

It would be absurd to read the works of such a writer for political instruction. The utmost that can be expected from any system promulgated by him is that it may be splendid and affecting, that it may suggest sublime and pleasing images. His scheme of philosophy is a mere day-dream, a poetical creation, like the Domdaniel cavern,[1] the Swerga,[2] or Padalon;[3] and indeed it bears no inconsiderable resemblance to those gorgeous visions. Like them, it has something of invention, grandeur, and brilliancy. But, like them, it is grotesque and extravagant, and perpetually violates even that conventional probability which is essential to the effect of works of art.

The warmest admirers of Mr. Southey will scarcely, we think, deny that his success has almost always borne an inverse proportion to the degree in which his undertakings have required a logical head. His poems, taken in the mass, stand far higher than his prose works. His official Odes indeed, among which the Vision of Judgment[4] must be classed, are, for the most part, worse than Pye's[1] and as bad as Cibber's;[2] nor do we think him generally happy in short pieces. But his longer poems, though full of faults, are nevertheless very extraordinary productions. We doubt greatly whether they will be read fifty years hence; but that, if they are read, they will be admired, we have no doubt whatever.[3]

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[1] The Domdaniel Cavern is the home of magicians described in Southey's *Thalaba the Destroyer*.

[2] Swerga is the Hindu heaven described in Southey's *Curse of Kehama*, canto vii.

[3] Padalon, or Patala, is the Hindu hell described in canto xxii. of the same poem.

[4] Southey's *Vision of Judgment*, published in 1821, described the reception of George III. into heaven. It was written in that perilous measure, the English hexameter, and is only remembered as having provoked Byron's famous parody.

But, though in general we prefer Mr. Southey's poetry to his prose, we must make one exception. The Life of Nelson is, beyond all doubt, the most perfect and the most delightful of his works. The fact is, as his poems most abundantly prove, that he is by no means so skilful in designing as in filling up. It was therefore an advantage to him to be furnished with an outline of characters and events, and to have no other task to perform than that of touching the cold sketch into life. No writer, perhaps, ever lived, whose talents so precisely qualified him to write the history of the great naval warrior. There were no fine riddles of the human heart to read, no theories to propound, no hidden causes to develope, no remote consequences to predict. The character of the hero lay on the surface. The exploits were brilliant and picturesque. The necessity of adhering to the real course of events saved Mr. Southey from those faults which deform the original plan of almost every one of his poems, and which even his innumerable beauties of detail scarcely redeem. The subject did not require the exercise of those reasoning powers the want of which is the blemish of his prose. It would not be easy to find, in all literary history, an instance of a more exact hit between wind and water. John Wesley and the Peninsular War were subjects of a very different kind, subjects which required all the qualities of a philosophic historian. In Mr. Southey's works on these subjects, he has, on the whole, failed. Yet there are charming specimens of the art of narration in both of them. The Life of Wesley will probably live. Defective as it is, it contains the only popular account of a most remarkable moral revolution, and of a man whose eloquence and logical acuteness might have made him eminent in literature, whose genius for government was not inferior to that of Richelieu, and who, whatever his errors may have been, devoted all his powers, in defiance of obloquy and derision, to what he sincerely considered as the highest good of his species. The History of the Peninsular War is already dead; indeed, the second volume was dead-born. The glory of producing an imperishable record of that great conflict seems to be reserved for Colonel Napier.

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[1] Henry James Pye, 1745-1813, wrote *Alfred*, an epic in six books, and other poems. He was appointed Poet Laureate in 1790, it has been suggested as a reward for Parliamentary services, since as a poet he was contemptible. Southey succeeded him as laureate.

[2] Colley Cibber, 1671-1757, was a good actor and a dramatist of some merit, but a bad poet. He became laureate in 1730, and was promoted by Pope to be the hero of the *Dunciad* in lieu of Theobald.

[3] They certainly are not read, and so great has been the change in taste with regard to poetry that we may doubt whether, if read, they would be admired. They are works rather of literary ability than of poetic genius.

The Book of the Church contains some stories very prettily told. The rest is mere rubbish. The adventure was manifestly one which could be achieved only by a profound thinker, and one in which even a profound thinker might have failed, unless his passions had been kept under strict control. But in all those works in which Mr. Southey has completely abandoned narration, and has undertaken to argue moral and political questions, his failure has been complete and ignominious. On such occasions his writings are rescued from utter contempt and derision solely by the beauty and purity of the English. We find, we confess, so great a charm in Mr. Southey's style that, even when he writes nonsense, we generally read it with pleasure, except indeed when he tries to be droll. A more insufferable jester never existed. He very often attempts to be humorous, and yet we do not remember a single occasion on which he has succeeded farther than to be quaintly and flippantly dull. In one of his works he tells us that Bishop Spratt[1] was very properly so called, inasmuch as he was a very small poet. And in the book now before us he cannot quote Francis Bugg,[2] the renegade Quaker, without a remark on his unsavoury name. A wise man might talk folly like this by his own fireside; but that any human being, after having made such a joke, should write it down, and copy it out, and transmit it to the printer, and correct the proof-sheets, and send it forth into the world, is enough to make us ashamed of our species.

The extraordinary bitterness of spirit which Mr. Southey manifests towards his opponents is, no doubt, in a great measure to be attributed to the manner in which he forms his opinions. Differences of taste, it has often been remarked, produce greater exasperation than differences on points of science.

But this is not all. A peculiar austerity marks almost all Mr.

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[1] Thomas Sprat, 1635-1713, Bishop of Rochester and Dean of Westminster, distinguished as a preacher and controversial writer, but insignificant as a poet.

[2] Francis Bugg, 1640-1724, became a member of the Society of Friends when he was thirty-five years of age; but after many disagreements with his brethren left them and wrote several tracts against Quakerism.

Southey's judgments of men and actions. We are far from blaming him for fixing on a high standard of morals, and for applying that standard to every case. But rigour ought to be accompanied by discernment; and of discernment Mr. Southey seems to be utterly destitute. His mode of judging is monkish. It is exactly what we should expect from a stern old Benedictine, who had been preserved from many ordinary frailties by the restraints of his situation. No man out of a cloister ever wrote about love, for example, so coldly and at the same time so grossly. His descriptions of it are just what we should hear from a recluse who knew the passion only from the details of the confessional. Almost all his heroes make love either like Seraphim or like cattle. He seems to have no notion of any thing between the Platonic passion of the Glendoveer[1] who gazes with rapture on his mistress's leprosy, and the brutal appetite of Arvalan[2] and Roderick.[3] In Roderick, indeed, the two characters are united. He is first all clay, and then all spirit. He goes forth a Tarquin, and comes back too ethereal to be married. The only love scene, as far as we can recollect, in Madoc,[4] consists of the delicate attentions which a savage, who has drunk too much of the Prince's excellent metheglin, offers to Goervyl. It would be the labour of a week to find, in all the vast mass of Mr. Southey's poetry, a single passage indicating any sympathy with those feelings which have consecrated the shades of Vaucluse and the rocks of Meillerie.

Indeed, if we except some very pleasing images of paternal tenderness and filial duty, there is scarcely any thing soft or humane in Mr. Southey's poetry. What theologians call the spiritual sins are his cardinal virtues, hatred, pride, and the insatiable thirst of vengeance. These passions he disguises under the name of duties; he purifies them from the alloy of vulgar interests; he ennobles them by uniting them with energy, fortitude, and a severe sanctity of manners; and he then holds them up to the admiration of mankind. This is the spirit of Thalaba, of Ladurlad, of Adosinda,[1] of Roderick after his conversion. It is the spirit which, in all his writings, Mr. Southey appears to affect. "I do well to be angry," seems to be the predominant feeling of his mind. Almost the only mark of charity which he vouchsafes to his opponents is to pray for their reformation; and this he does in terms not unlike those in which we can imagine a Portuguese priest interceding with heaven for a Jew, delivered over to the secular arm after a relapse.

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[1] One of the principal characters in the *Curse of Kehama*. In justice to Southey it must be said that the Glendoveer is not a mere man, but a supernatural being.

[2] Arvalan is the son of Kehama slain by Ladurlad who becomes the victim of Kehama's curse.

[3] Roderic was the last Gothic King of Spain. He was defeated and killed by the Arab invaders in a battle fought near Xeres in the year 711. According to the legend which Southey embodied in his epic, the Mohammedan conquest was brought about by the lawless passion of the King, who escaped from the field, found grace to repent his sins, and died as a holy hermit many years afterwards. On behalf of Southey it may be said that violent natures are most susceptible of such sudden transformations.

[4] Madoc is a Welsh Prince who visits the New World. His sister Goervyl who accompanies him attracts the admiration of a Mexican chief (*Madoc*, pt. ii., canto 4).

We have always heard, and fully believe, that Mr. Southey is a very amiable and humane man; nor do we intend to apply to him personally any of the remarks which we have made on the spirit of his writings. Such are the caprices of human nature. Even Uncle Toby troubled himself very little about the French grenadiers who fell on the glacis of Namur.[2] And Mr. Southey, when he takes up his pen, changes his nature as much as Captain Shandy, when he girt on his sword. The only opponents to whom the Laureate gives quarter are those in whom he finds something of his own character reflected. He seems to have an instinctive antipathy for calm, moderate men, for men who shun extremes, and who render reasons. He has treated Mr. Owen of Lanark,[3] for example, with infinitely more respect than he has shown to Mr. Hallam or to Dr. Lingard;[4] and this for no reason that we can discover, except that Mr. Owen is more unreasonably and hopelessly in the wrong than any speculator of our time.

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[1] Adosinda is a Gothic lady in Southey's *Roderic* whose husband and child have been massacred by the Moors and who dedicates herself to the work of avenging and liberating Spain.

[2] Uncle Toby is not represented as expressing any indifference to the sufferings of the enemy. Sterne, speaking in his own person, says that "the English made themselves masters of the covered way before St. Nicolas' Gate, notwithstanding the gallantry of the French officers who exposed themselves upon the glacis, sword in hand" (*The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy*, bk. i., ch. ii.).

[3] Robert Owen, 1771-1858, the philanthropist who established the model mills of New Lanark and became one of the founders of English socialism. He held many singular opinions, rejected all forms of religious belief, held that circumstances determine character, considered the substitution of machinery for human labour an evil, etc. But his goodness of heart, his services to co-operation, deserved a much more respectful notice than he obtains from Macaulay. He was probably the original of Mr. Toogood in Peacock's *Crochet Castle*.

[4] Southey reviewed Hallam's *Constitutional History of England* in the *Quarterly Review* for April, 1828, so bitterly that Hallam nearly quarrelled with Murray for printing such an article. In the *Colloquies* and elsewhere Southey often indulged in bitter allusions to Lingard.

Mr. Southey's political system is just what we might expect from a man who regards politics, not as matter of science, but as matter of taste and feeling. All his schemes of government have been inconsistent with themselves. In his youth he was a republican; yet, as he tells us in his preface to these Colloquies, he was even then opposed to the Catholic Claims. He is now a violent Ultra-Tory. Yet, while he maintains, with vehemence approaching to ferocity, all the sterner and harsher parts of the Ultra-Tory theory of government, the baser and dirtier part of that theory disgusts him. Exclusion, persecution, severe punishments for libellers and demagogues, proscriptions, massacres, civil war, if necessary, rather than any concession to a discontented people; these are the measures which he seems inclined to recommend. A severe and gloomy tyranny, crushing opposition, silencing remonstrance, drilling the minds of the people into unreasoning obedience, has in it something of grandeur which delights his imagination. But there is nothing fine in the shabby tricks and jobs of office; and Mr. Southey, accordingly, has no toleration for them. When a Jacobin, he did not perceive that his system led logically, and would have led practically, to the removal of religious distinctions. He now commits a similar error. He renounces the abject and paltry part of the creed of his party, without perceiving that it is also an essential part of that creed. He would have tyranny and purity together; though the most superficial observation might have shown him that there can be no tyranny without corruption.

It is high time, however, that we should proceed to the consideration of the work which is our more immediate subject, and which, indeed, illustrates in almost every page our general remarks on Mr. Southey's writings. In the preface, we are informed that the author, notwithstanding some statements to the contrary, was always opposed to the Catholic Claims. We fully believe this; both because we are sure that Mr. Southey is incapable of publishing a deliberate falsehood, and because his assertion is in itself probable. We should have expected that, even in his wildest paroxysms of democratic enthusiasm, Mr. Southey would have felt no wish to see a simple remedy applied to a great practical evil. We should have expected that the only measure which all the great statesmen of two generations have agreed with each other in supporting would be the only measure which Mr. Southey would have agreed with himself in opposing. He has passed from one extreme of political opinion to another, as Satan in Milton went round the globe, contriving constantly to "ride with darkness."[1] Wherever the thickest shadow of the night may at any moment chance to fall, there is Mr. Southey. It is not every body who could have so dexterously avoided blundering on the daylight in the course of a journey to the antipodes.

Mr. Southey has not been fortunate in the plan of any of his fictitious narratives. But he has never failed so conspicuously as in the work before us; except, indeed, in the wretched Vision of Judgment. In November 1817, it seems the Laureate was sitting over his newspaper, and meditating about the death of the Princess Charlotte. An elderly person of very dignified aspect makes his appearance, announces himself as a stranger from a distant country, and apologizes very politely for not having provided himself with letters of introduction. Mr. Southey supposes his visiter to be some American gentleman who has come to see the lakes and the lake-poets, and accordingly proceeds to perform, with that grace, which only long practice can give, all the duties which authors owe to starers. He assures his guest that some of the most agreeable visits which he has received have been from Americans, and that he knows men among them whose talents and virtues would do honour to any country. In passing we may observe, to the honour of Mr. Southey, that, though he evidently has no liking for the American institutions, he never speaks of the people of the United States with that pitiful affectation of contempt by which some members of his party have done more than wars or tariffs can do to excite mutual enmity between two communities formed for mutual friendship. Great as the faults of his mind are, paltry spite like this has no place in it. Indeed it is scarcely conceivable that a man of his sensibility and his imagination should look without pleasure and national pride on the vigorous and splendid youth of a great people, whose veins are filled with our blood, whose minds are nourished with our literature, and on whom is entailed the rich inheritance of our civilisation, our freedom, and our glory.

But we must return to Mr. Southey's study at Keswick. The visiter informs the hospitable poet that he is not an American but a spirit. Mr. Southey, with more frankness than civility, tells him that he is a very queer one. The stranger holds out his hand. It has neither weight nor substance. Mr. Southey upon this becomes more serious; his hair stands on end; and he adjures the spectre to tell him what he is, and why he comes. The ghost turns out to be Sir Thomas More. The traces of martyrdom, it seems, are worn in the other world, as stars and ribands are worn in this. Sir Thomas shows the poet a red streak round his neck, brighter than a ruby, and informs him that Cranmer wears a suit of flames in Paradise, the right hand glove, we suppose, of peculiar brilliancy.

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[1] "The space of seven continued nights he rode
With darkness—thrice the equinoctial line
He circled, four times crossed the car of Night
From pole to pole, traversing each colure."
—*Paradise Lost*, bk. ix., lines 63-66.

Sir Thomas pays but a short visit on this occasion, but promises to cultivate the new acquaintance which he has formed, and, after begging that his visit may be kept secret from Mrs. Southey, vanishes into air.

The rest of the book consists of conversations between Mr. Southey and the spirit about trade, currency, Catholic emancipation, periodical literature, female nunneries, butchers, snuff, book-stalls, and a hundred other subjects. Mr. Southey very hospitably takes an opportunity to escort the ghost round the lakes, and directs his attention to the most beautiful points of view. Why a spirit was to be evoked for the purpose of talking over such matters and seeing such sights, why the vicar of the parish, a blue-stocking from London, or an American, such as Mr. Southey at first supposed the aerial visiter to be, might not have done as well, we are unable to conceive. Sir Thomas tells Mr. Southey nothing about future events, and indeed absolutely disclaims the gift of prescience. He has learned to talk modern English. He has read all the new publications, and loves a jest as well as when he jested with the executioner, though we cannot say that the quality of his wit has materially improved in Paradise. His powers of reasoning, too, are by no means in as great vigour as when he sate on the woolsack; and though he boasts that he is "divested of all those passions which cloud the intellects and warp the understandings of men," we think him, we must confess, far less stoical than formerly. As to revelations, he tells Mr. Southey at the outset to expect none from him. The Laureate expresses some doubts, which assuredly will not raise him in the opinion of our modern millennarians, as to the divine authority of the Apocalypse. But the ghost preserves an impenetrable silence. As far as we remember, only one hint about the employment of disembodied spirits escapes him. He encourages Mr. Southey to hope that there is a Paradise Press, at which all the valuable publications of Mr. Murray and Mr.

Colburn are reprinted as regularly as at Philadelphia;[1] and delicately insinuates that Thalaba and the Curse of Kehama are among the number. What a contrast does this absurd fiction present to those charming narratives which Plato and Cicero prefixed to their dialogues! What cost in machinery, yet what poverty of effect! A ghost brought in to say what any man might have said! The glorified spirit of a great statesman and philosopher dawdling, like a bilious old nabob at a watering place, over quarterly reviews and novels, dropping in to pay long calls, making excursions in search of the picturesque! The scene of St. George and St. Dennis in the Pucelle is hardly more ridiculous.[2] We know what Voltaire meant. Nobody, however, can suppose that Mr. Southey means to make game of the mysteries of a higher state of existence. The fact is that, in the work before us, in the Vision of Judgement, and in some of his other pieces, his mode of treating the most solemn subjects differs from that of open scoffers only as the extravagant representations of sacred persons and things in some grotesque Italian paintings differ from the caricatures which Carlile[3] exposes in the front of his shop. We interpret the particular act by the general character. What in the window of a convicted blasphemer we call blasphemous, we call only absurd and ill judged in an altar-piece.

We now come to the conversations which pass between Mr. Southey and Sir Thomas More, or rather between two Southeys, equally eloquent, equally angry, equally unreasonable, and equally given to talking about what they do not understand.[4] Perhaps we could not select a better instance of the spirit which pervades the whole book than the passages in which Mr. Southey gives his opinion of the manufacturing system. There is nothing which he hates so bitterly. It is, according to him, a system more tyrannical than that of the feudal ages, a system of actual servitude, a system which destroys the bodies and degrades the minds of those who are engaged in it. He expresses a hope that the competition of other nations may drive us out of the field; that our foreign trade may decline; and that we may thus enjoy a restoration of national sanity and strength. But he seems to think that the extermination of the whole manufacturing population would be a blessing, if the evil could be removed in no other way.

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[1] The United States then giving no protection to foreign authors.

[2] Voltaire, *La Pucelle*, canto xi.

[3] Richard Carlile, 1790-1843, was a publisher and an author of what was in his time considered profane and seditious literature. For this offence he was in 1819 sentenced to three years' imprisonment and a fine of £1,500. His wife and many of his shopmen also suffered imprisonment. The severity with which he was treated drew forth the sympathy of many who disliked his opinions.

[4] AUTHOR'S FOOTNOTE.—A passage in which some expressions used by Mr. Southey were misrepresented, certainly without any unfair intention, has been here omitted.

Mr. Southey does not bring forward a single fact in support of these views; and, as it seems to us, there are facts which lead to a very different conclusion. In the first place, the poor-rate is very decidedly lower in the manufacturing than in the agricultural districts. If Mr. Southey will look over the Parliamentary returns on this subject, he will find that the amount of parochial relief required by the labourers in the different counties of England is almost exactly in inverse proportion to the degree in which the manufacturing system has been introduced into those counties. The returns for the years ending in March 1825, and in March 1828, are now before us. In the former year we find the poor-rate highest in Sussex, about twenty shillings to every inhabitant. Then come Buckinghamshire, Essex, Suffolk, Bedfordshire, Hnntingdonshire, Kent, and Norfolk. In all these the rate is above fifteen shillings a head. We will not go through the whole. Even in Westmoreland and the North Riding of Yorkshire, the rate is at more than eight shillings. In Cumberland and Monmouthshire, the most fortunate of all the agricultural districts, it is at six shillings. But in the West Riding of Yorkshire, it is as low as five shillings; and when we come to Lancashire, we find it at four shillings, one fifth of what it is in Sussex. The returns of the year ending in March 1828 are a little, and but a little, more unfavourable to the manufacturing districts. Lancashire, even in that season of distress, required a smaller poor-rate than any other district, and little more than one fourth of the poor-rate raised in Sussex. Cumberland alone, of the agricultural districts, was as well off as the West Riding of Yorkshire. These facts seem to indicate that the manufacturer is both in a more comfortable and in a less dependent situation than the agricultural labourer.

As to the effect of the manufacturing system on the bodily health, we must beg leave to estimate it by a standard far too low and vulgar for a mind so imaginative as that of Mr. Southey, the proportion of births and deaths. We know that, during the growth of this atrocious system, this new misery, to use the phrases of Mr. Southey, this new enormity, this birth of a portentous age, this pest which no man can approve whose heart is not seared or whose understanding has not been darkened, there has been a great diminution of mortality, and that this diminution has been greater in the manufacturing towns than any where else. The mortality still is, as it always was, greater in towns than in the country. But the difference has diminished in an extraordinary degree. There is the best reason to believe that the annual mortality of Manchester, about the middle of the last century, was one in twenty-eight. It is now reckoned at one in forty-five. In Glasgow and Leeds a similar improvement has taken place. Nay, the rate of mortality in those three great capitals of the manufacturing districts is now considerably less than it was, fifty years ago, over England and Wales, taken together, open country and all. We might with some plausibility maintain that the people live longer because they are better fed, better lodged, better clothed, and better attended in sickness, and that these improvements are owing to that increase of national wealth which the manufacturing system has produced.[1]

Much more might be said on this subject. But to what end? It is not from bills of mortality and statistical tables that Mr. Southey has learned his political creed. He cannot stoop to study the history of the system which he abuses, to strike the balance between the good and evil which it has produced, to compare district with district, or generation with generation. We will give his own reason for his opinion, the only reason which he gives for it, in his own words :—

"We remained awhile in silence looking upon the assemblage of dwellings below. Here, and in the adjoining hamlet of Millbeck, the effects of manufactures and of agriculture may be seen and compared. The old cottages are such as the poet and the painter equally delight in beholding. Substantially built of the native stone without mortar, dirtied with no white lime, and their long low roofs covered with slate, if they had been raised by the magic of some indigenous Amphion's music, the materials could not have adjusted themselves more beautifully in accord with the surrounding scene; and time has still further harmonized them with weather stains, lichens, and moss, short grasses, and short fern, and stone-plants of various kinds. The ornamented chimneys, round or square, less adorned than those which, like little turrets, crest the houses of the Portuguese peasantry; and yet not less happily suited to their place, the hedge of clipt box beneath the windows, the rose-bushes beside the door, the little patch of flower ground, with its tall hollyhocks in front; the garden beside, the beehives, and the orchard with its bank of daffodils and snow-drops, the earliest and the profusest in these parts, indicate in the owners some portion of ease and leisure, some regard to neatness and comfort, some sense of natural, and innocent, and healthful enjoyment. The new cottages of the manufacturers are upon the manufacturing pattern—naked, and in a row.

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[1] Although the progress of science and of wealth had raised the average length of life, the excessive toil of women and children in the factories caused a real physical degeneracy among a part of the people.

" 'How is it,' said I, 'that every thing which is connected with manufactures presents such features of unqualified deformity? From the largest of Mammon's temples down to the poorest hovel in which his helotry are stalled, these edifices have all one character. Time will not mellow them; nature will neither clothe nor conceal them; and they will remain always as offensive to the eye as to the mind.' "[1]

Here is wisdom. Here are the principles on which nations are to be governed. Rose-bushes and poor-rates, rather than steam-engines and independence. Mortality and cottages with weather-stains, rather than health and long life with edifices which time cannot mellow. We are told, that our age has invented atrocities beyond the imagination of our fathers; that society has been brought into a state compared with which extermination would be a blessing; and all because the dwellings of cotton-spinners are naked and rectangular. Mr. Southey has found out a way, he tells us, in which the effects of manufactures and agriculture may be compared. And what is this way? To stand on a hill, to look at a cottage and a factory, and to see which is the prettier. Does Mr. Southey think that the body of the English peasantry live, or ever lived, in substantial or ornamented cottages, with box-hedges, flower-gardens, beehives, and orchards? If not, what is his parallel worth? We despise those mock philosophers, who think that they serve the cause of science by depreciating literature and the fine arts. But if any thing could excuse their narrowness of mind, it would be such a book as this. It is not strange that, when one enthusiast makes the picturesque the test of political good, another should feel inclined to proscribe altogether the pleasures of taste and imagination.[2]

Thus it is that Mr. Southey reasons about matters with which he thinks himself perfectly conversant. We cannot, therefore, be surprised to find that he commits extraordinary blunders when he writes on points of which he acknowledges himself to be ignorant. He confesses that he is not versed in political economy, and that he has neither liking nor aptitude for it; and he then proceeds to read the public a lecture concerning it which fully bears out his confession.

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[1] *Colloquies*, i., p. 173.

[2] But the hideous aspect of manufacturing towns and districts is a real and considerable evil, although it may be outweighed by the benefits of industry.

"All wealth," says Sir Thomas More, "in former times was tangible. It consisted in land, money, or chattels, which were either of real or conventional value."

Montesinos,[1] as Mr. Southey somewhat affectedly calls himself, answers thus:—

"Jewels, for example, and pictures, as in Holland, where indeed at one time tulip bulbs answered the same purpose."

"That bubble," says Sir Thomas, "was one of those contagious insanities to which communities are subject. All wealth was real, till the extent of commerce rendered a paper currency necessary; which differed from precious stones and pictures in this important point, that there was no limit to its production."

"We regard it," says Montesinos, "as the representative of real wealth; and, therefore, limited always to the amount of what it represents."

"Pursue that notion," answers the ghost, "and you will be in the dark presently. Your provincial bank-notes, which constitute almost wholly the circulating medium of certain districts, pass current to-day. To-morrow tidings may come that the house which issued them has stopt payment, and what do they represent then? You will find them the shadow of a shade."[2]

We scarcely know at which end to begin to disentangle this knot of absurdities. We might ask, why it should be a greater proof of insanity in men to set a high value on rare tulips than on rare stones, which are neither more useful nor more beautiful? We might ask how it can be said that there is no limit to the production of paper money, when a man is hanged if he issues any in the name of another, and is forced to cash what he issues in his own? But Mr. Southey's error lies deeper still. "All wealth," says he, "was tangible and real till paper currency was introduced." Now, was there ever, since men emerged from a state of utter barbarism, an age in which there were no debts? Is not a debt, while the solvency of the debtor is undoubted, always reckoned as part of the wealth of the creditor? Yet is it tangible and real wealth? Does it cease to be wealth, because there is the security of a written acknowledgment for it? And what else is paper currency? Did Mr. Southey ever read a bank-note? If he did, he would see that it is a written acknowledgment of a debt, and a promise to pay that debt. The promise may be violated: the debt may remain unpaid: those to whom it was due may suffer: but this is a risk not confined to cases of paper currency: it is a risk inseparable from the relation of debtor and creditor. Every man who sells goods for any thing but ready money runs the risk of finding that what he considered as part of his wealth one day is nothing at all the next day. Mr. Southey refers to the picture-galleries of Holland. The pictures were undoubtedly real and tangible possessions. But surely it might happen that a burgomaster might owe a picture-dealer a thousand guilders for a Teniers. What in this case corresponds to our paper money is not the picture, which is tangible, but the claim of the picture-dealer on his customer for the price of the picture; and this claim is not tangible. Now, would not the picture-dealer consider this claim as part of his wealth? Would not a tradesman who knew of the claim give credit to the picture-dealer the more readily on account of the claim? The burgomaster might be ruined. If so, would not those consequences follow which, as Mr. Southey tells us, were never heard of till paper money came into use? Yesterday this claim was worth a thousand guilders. To-day what is it? The shadow of a shade.

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[1] This name was no doubt suggested to Southey by the adventure of the cave of Montesinos in *Don Quixote*, pt. ii.

[2] *Colloquies*, i., pp. 178-179. Whatever Southey's unreasonableness, he shared the dislike for paper money with many clever contemporaries. It inspired several amusing passages in Peacock, whose opinions on most subjects were the very opposite to Southey's. The reason of this prejudice must be sought in the lack of adequate restraint upon the issue of notes by private banks at this period and the many stoppages of payment which were the result.

It is true that, the more readily claims of this sort are transferred from hand to hand, the more extensive will be the injury produced by a single failure. The laws of all nations sanction, in certain cases, the transfer of rights not yet reduced into possession. Mr. Southey would scarcely wish, we should think, that all indorsements of bills and notes should be declared invalid. Yet even if this were done, the transfer of claims would imperceptibly take place, to a very great extent. When the baker trusts the butcher, for example, he is in fact, though not in form, trusting the butcher's customers. A man who owes large bills to tradesmen, and fails to pay them, almost always produces distress through a very wide circle of people with whom he never dealt.

In short, what Mr. Southey takes for a difference in kind is only a difference of form and degree. In every society men have claims on the property of others. In every society there is a possibility that some debtors may not be able to fulfil their obligations. In every society, therefore, there is wealth which is not tangible, and which may become the shadow of a shade.

Mr. Southey then proceeds to a dissertation on the national debt, which he considers in a new and most consolatory light, as a clear addition to the income of the country.

"You can understand," says Sir Thomas, "that it constitutes a great part of the national wealth."

"So large a part," answers Montesinos, "that the interest amounted, during the prosperous times of agriculture, to as much as the rental of all the land in Great Britain; and at present to the rental of all lands, all houses, and all other fixed property put together."[1]

The Ghost and Laureate agree that it is very desirable that there should be so secure and advantageous a deposit for wealth as the funds afford. Sir Thomas then proceeds:—

"Another and far more momentous benefit must not be overlooked; the expenditure of an annual interest, equalling, as you have stated, the present rental of all fixed property."

"That expenditure," quoth Montesinos, "gives employment to half the industry in the kingdom, and feeds half the mouths. Take, indeed, the weight of the national debt from this great and complicated social machine, and the wheels must stop."[2]

From this passage we should have been inclined to think that Mr. Southey supposes the dividends to be a free gift periodically sent down from heaven to the fundholders, as quails and manna were sent to the Israelites; were it not that he has vouchsafed, in the following question and answer, to give the public some information which, we believe, was very little needed.

"Whence comes the interest?" says Sir Thomas.

"It is raised," answers Montesinos, "by taxation."[3]

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[1] *Colloquies*, i., pp. 180-181. The interest on the National Debt at the close of the Napoleonic wars amounted roughly to £40,000,000, but it had been somewhat reduced at the date of the *Colloquies*. The rental of all the land of Great Britain must even then have been greater.

[2] All this is very absurd. It must be remembered that the greater part of the National Debt had been incurred between 1793 and 1815 in wars with France which all the Tories justified and many Whigs denounced, and that in the period of distress following these wars demagogues occasionally suggested repudiation. Hence, devout Tories were sometimes warmed into maintaining that the National Debt was a positive addition to the national wealth, and therefore a blessing to the whole community. The first Sir Robert Peel, father of the statesman, maintained this cheerful thesis in a pamphlet entitled *The National Debt Productive of National Prosperity*.

[3] *Colloquies*, i., p. 182.

Now, has Mr. Southey ever considered what would be done with this sum if it were not paid as interest to the national creditor? If he would think over this matter for a short time, we suspect that the "momentous benefit" of which he talks would appear to him to shrink strangely in amount. A fundholder, we will suppose, spends dividends amounting to five hundred pounds a year; and his ten nearest neighbours pay fifty pounds each to the tax-gatherer, for the purpose of discharging the interest of the national debt. If the debt were wiped out, a measure, be it understood, which we by no means recommend, the fundholder would cease to spend his five hundred pounds a year. He would no longer give employment to industry, or put food into the mouths of labourers. This Mr. Southey thinks a fearful evil. But is there no mitigating circumstance? Each of the ten neighbours of our fundholder has fifty pounds a year more than formerly. Each of them will, as it seems to our feeble understandings, employ more industry and feed more mouths than formerly. The sum is exactly the same. It is in different hands. But on what grounds does Mr. Southey call upon us to believe that it is in the hands of men who will spend it less liberally or less judiciously? He seems to think that nobody but a fundholder can employ the poor; that, if a tax is remitted, those who formerly used to pay it proceed immediately to dig holes in the earth, and to bury the sum which the government had been accustomed to take; that no money can set industry in motion till such money has been taken by the tax-gatherer out of one man's pocket and put into another man's pocket. We really wish that Mr. Southey would try to prove this principle, which is indeed the foundation of his whole theory of finance: for we think it right to hint to him that our hard-hearted and unimaginative generation will expect some more satisfactory reason than the only one with which he has yet favoured it, namely, a similitude touching evaporation and dew.

Both the theory and the illustration, indeed, are old friends of ours. In every season of distress which we can remember, Mr. Southey has been proclaiming that it is not from economy, but from increased taxation, that the country must expect relief; and he still, we find, places the undoubting faith of a political Diafoirus, in his

"Resaignare, repurgare, et reclysterizare." [1]

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[1] Molière, *Le Malade Imaginaire, troisième intermède.* The words are put into the mouth, not of M. Diafoirus, but of the Bachelor who is undergoing examination for the degree of Doctor of Medicine.

"A people," he tells us, "may be too rich, but a government cannot be so."

"A state," says he, "cannot have more wealth at its command than may be employed for the general good, a liberal expenditure in national works being one of the surest means of promoting national prosperity; and the benefit being still more obvious, of an expenditure directed to the purposes of national improvement. But a people may be too rich."[1]

We fully admit that a state cannot have at its command more wealth than may be employed for the general good. But neither can individuals, or bodies of individuals, have at their command more wealth than may be employed for the general good. If there be no limit to the sum which may be usefully laid out in public works and national improvement, then wealth, whether in the hands of private men or of the government, may always, if the possessors choose to spend it usefully, be usefully spent. The only ground, therefore, on which Mr. Southey can possibly maintain that a government cannot be too rich, but that a people may be too rich, must be this, that governments are more likely to spend their money on good objects than private individuals.

But what is useful expenditure? "A liberal expenditure in national works," says Mr. Southey, "is one of the surest means for promoting national prosperity." What does he mean by national prosperity? Does he mean the wealth of the state? If so, his reasoning runs thus: The more wealth a state has the better; for the more wealth a state has the more wealth it will have. This is surely something like that fallacy, which is ungallantly termed a lady's reason. If by national prosperity he means the wealth of the people, of how gross a contradiction is Mr. Southey guilty. A people, he tells us, may be too rich: a government cannot: for a government can employ its riches in making the people richer. The wealth of the people is to be taken from them, because they have too much, and laid out in works, which will yield them more.[2]

We are really at a loss to determine whether Mr. Southey's reason for recommending large taxation is that it will make the people rich, or that it will make them poor. But we are sure that, if his object is to make them rich, he takes the wrong course. There are two or three principles respecting public works, which, as an experience of vast extent proves, may be trusted in almost every case.

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[1] *Colloquies*, i., p. 193.

[2] What Southey probably meant was that wealth in the hands of the Government is more likely to benefit the public than wealth in the hands of very rich individuals. This opinion would find more favour now than seventy years ago.

It scarcely ever happens that any private man or body of men will invest property in a canal, a tunnel, or a bridge, but from an expectation that the outlay will be profitable to them. No work of this sort can be profitable to private speculators, unless the public be willing to pay for the use of it. The public will not pay of their own accord for what yields no profit or convenience to them. There is thus a direct and obvious connection between the motive which induces individuals to undertake such a work, and the utility of the work.

Can we find any such connection in the case of a public work executed by a government? If it is useful, are the individuals who rule the country richer? If it is useless, are they poorer? A public man may be solicitous for his credit. But is not he likely to gain more credit by an useless display of ostentatious architecture in a great town than by the best road or the best canal in some remote province? The fame of public works is a much less certain test of their utility than the amount of toll collected at them. In a corrupt age, there will be direct embezzlement. In the purest age, there will be abundance of jobbing. Never were the statesmen of any country more sensitive to public opinion, and more spotless in pecuniary transactions, than those who have of late governed England. Yet we have only to look at the buildings recently erected in London for a proof of our rule. In a bad age, the fate of the public is to be robbed outright. In a good age, it is merely to have the dearest and the worst of every thing.

Buildings for state purposes the state must erect. And here we think that, in general, the state ought to stop. We firmly believe that five hundred thousand pounds subscribed by individuals for rail-roads or canals would produce more advantage to the public than five millions voted by Parliament for the same purpose. There are certain old saws about the master's eye and about every body's business, in which we place very great faith.[1]

There is, we have said, no consistency in Mr. Southey's political system. But if there be in his political system any leading principle, any one error which diverges more widely and variously than any other, it is that of which his theory about national works is a ramification. He conceives that the business of the magistrate is, not merely to see that the persons and property of the people are secure from attack, but that he ought to be a jack-of-all-trades, architect, engineer, schoolmaster, merchant, theologian, a Lady Bountiful in every parish, a Paul Pry in every house, spying, eaves-dropping, relieving, admonishing, spending our money for us, and choosing our opinions for us. His principle is, if we understand it rightly, that no man can do any thing so well for himself as his rulers, be they who they may, can do it for him, and that a government approaches nearer and nearer to perfection, in proportion as it interferes more and more with the habits and notions of individuals.

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[1] It would be admitted by most people at the present day that the condition of society should, in great measure, determine the action of the Government with regard to public works. In poor and half-barbarous countries it must do much that in modern England may be left to private enterprise. Even in England certain classes of useful works, such as harbours of refuge, lighthouses, reconstruction of streets, etc., have to be carried out by public authorities.

He seems to be fully convinced that it is in the power of government to relieve all the distresses under which the lower orders labour. Nay, he considers doubt on this subject as impious. We cannot refrain from quoting his argument on this subject. It is a perfect jewel of logic.

"'Many thousands in your metropolis,' says Sir Thomas More, 'rise every morning without knowing how they are to subsist during the day; as many of them, where they are to lay their heads at night. All men, even the vicious themselves, know that wickedness leads to misery: but many, even among the good and the wise, have yet to learn that misery is almost as often the cause of wickedness.'[1]

"'There are many,' says Montesinos, 'who know this, but believe that it is not in the power of human institutions to prevent this misery. They see the effect, but regard the causes as inseparable from the condition of human nature.'

"'As surely as God is good,' replies Sir Thomas, 'so surely there is no such thing as necessary evil. For, by the religious mind, sickness, and pain, and death, are not to be accounted evils.'"[2]

Now if sickness, pain, and death, are not evils, we cannot understand why it should be an evil that thousands should rise without knowing how they are to subsist. The only evil of hunger is that it produces first pain, then sickness, and finally death. If it did not produce these, it would be no calamity. If these are not evils, it is no calamity. We will propose a very plain dilemma: either physical pain is an evil, or it is not an evil. If it is an evil, then there is necessary evil in the universe: if it is not, why should the poor be delivered from it?[1]

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[1] This remark is true and finely expressed.

[2] *Colloquies*, i., pp. 109-110.

Mr. Southey entertains as exaggerated a notion of the wisdom of governments as of their power. He speaks with the greatest disgust of the respect now paid to public opinion. That opinion is, according to him, to be distrusted and dreaded; its usurpation ought to be vigorously resisted; and the practice of yielding to it is likely to ruin the country.[2] To maintain police is, according to him, only one of the ends of government. The duties of a ruler are patriarchal and paternal. He ought to consider the moral discipline of the people as his first object, to establish a religion, to train the whole community in that religion, and to consider all dissenters as his own enemies.

"'Nothing,' says Sir Thomas, 'is more certain, than that religion is the basis upon which civil government rests; that from religion power derives its authority, laws their efficacy, and both their seal and sanction; and it is necessary that this religion be established for the security of the state, and for the welfare of the people, who would otherwise be moved to and fro with every wind of doctrine. A state is secure in proportion as the people are attached to its institutions: it is, therefore, the first and plainest rule of sound policy, that the people be trained up in the way they should go. The state that neglects this prepares its own destruction; and they who train them in any other way are undermining it. Nothing in abstract science can be more certain than these positions are.'

"'All of which,' answers Montesinos, 'are nevertheless denied by our professors of the arts Babblative and Scribblative: some in the audacity of evil designs, and others in the glorious assurance of impenetrable ignorance.'"[3]

The greater part of the two volumes before us is merely an amplification of these paragraphs. What does Mr. Southey mean by saying that religion is demonstrably the basis of civil government? He cannot surely mean that men have no motives except those derived from religion for establishing and supporting civil government, that no temporal advantage is derived from civil government, that men would experience no temporal inconvenience from living in a state of anarchy? If he allows, as we think he must allow, that it is for the good of mankind in this world to have civil government, and that the great majority of mankind have always thought it for their good in this world to have civil government, we then have a basis for government quite distinct from religion. It is true that the Christian religion sanctions government, as it sanctions every thing which promotes the happiness and virtue of our species. But we are at a loss to conceive in what sense religion can be said to be the basis of government, in which religion is not also the basis of the practices of eating, drinking, and lighting fires in cold weather. Nothing in history is more certain than that government has existed, has received some obedience, and has given some protection, in times in which it derived no support from religion, in times in which there was no religion that influenced the hearts and lives of men. It was not from dread of Tartarus, or from belief in the Elysian fields, that an Athenian wished to have some institutions which might keep Orestes[1] from filching his cloak, or Midias[2] from breaking his head. "It is from religion," says Mr. Southey, "that power derives its authority, and laws their efficacy." From what religion does our power over the Hindoos derive its authority, or the law in virtue of which we hang Brahmins its efficacy? For thousands of years civil government has existed in almost every corner of the world, in ages of priestcraft, in ages of fanaticism, in ages of Epicurean indifference, in ages of enlightened piety. However pure or impure the faith of the people might be, whether they adored a beneficent or a malignant power, whether they thought the soul mortal or immortal, they have, as soon as they ceased to be absolute savages, found out their need of civil government, and instituted it accordingly. It is as universal as the practice of cookery. Yet, it is as certain, says Mr. Southey, as any thing in abstract science, that government is founded on religion. We should like to know what notion Mr. Southey has of the demonstrations of abstract science. A very vague one, we suspect.

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[1] The inconsistency here imputed to Southey is at all events shared by nearly all religious people, for they approve of attempts to lessen the so-called evils of life whilst they believe that these evils, being divinely ordained, are in a sense but apparently evil.

[2] So Peel, writing to Croker in 1820, described public opinion as "that great compound of folly, weakness, prejudice, wrong feeling, right feeling, obstinacy and newspaper paragraphs."

[3] *Colloquies*, ii., pp. 47-48.

The proof proceeds. As religion is the basis of government, and as the state is secure in proportion as the people are attached to public institutions, it is therefore, says Mr. Southey, the first rule of policy, that the government should train the people in the way in which they should go; and it is plain that those who train them in any other way are undermining the state.[1]

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[1] A footpad celebrated by Aristophanes in the *Acharnians* and the *Birds*.

[2] An Athenian who assaulted Demosthenes and was accused by him in a speech which we still possess.

Now it does not appear to us to be the first object that people should always believe in the established religion and be attached to the established government. A religion may be false. A government may be oppressive. And whatever support government gives to false religions, or religion to oppressive governments, we consider as a clear evil.

The maxim, that governments ought to train the people in the way in which they should go, sounds well. But is there any reason for believing that a government is more likely to lead the people in the right way than the people to fall into the right way of themselves? Have there not been governments which were blind leaders of the blind? Are there not still such governments? Can it be laid down as a general rule that the movement of political and religious truth is rather downwards from the government to the people than upwards from the people to the government? These are questions which it is of importance to have clearly resolved. Mr. Southey declaims against public opinion, which is now, he tells us, usurping supreme power. Formerly, according to him, the laws governed; now public opinion governs. What are laws but expressions of the opinion of some class which has power over the rest of the community? By what was the world ever governed but by the opinion of some person or persons? By what else can it ever be governed? What are all systems, religious, political, or scientific, but opinions resting on evidence more or less satisfactory? The question is not between human opinion and some higher and more certain mode of arriving at truth, but between opinion and opinion, between the opinions of one man and another, or of one class and another, or of one generation and another. Public opinion is not infallible; but can Mr. Southey construct any institutions which shall secure to us the guidance of an infallible opinion? Can Mr. Southey select any family, any profession, any class, in short, distinguished by any plain badge from the rest of the community, whose opinion is more likely to be just than this much abused public opinion? Would he choose the peers, for example? Or the two hundred tallest men in the country? Or the poor Knights of Windsor?[1] Or children who are born with cauls? Or the seventh sons of seventh sons? We cannot suppose that he would recommend popular election; for that is merely an appeal to public opinion. And to say that society ought to be governed by the opinion of the wisest and best, though true, is useless. Whose opinion is to decide who are the wisest and best?

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[1] Without accepting Southey's conclusions we may admit that the strength of a state is affected by the moral and religious beliefs of the citizens. To take Macaulay's instance, our Indian Empire is the weaker for standing out of all connection with any of the religions which exert so strong an influence over the Indian peoples. Every government which promotes a system of popular education is thereby fostering certain moral habits, certain political beliefs, and in some cases certain religious tenets.

Mr. Southey and many other respectable people seem to think that, when they have once proved the moral and religious training of the people to be a most important object, it follows, of course, that it is an object which the government ought to pursue. They forget that we have to consider, not merely the goodness of the end, but also the fitness of the means. Neither in the natural nor in the political body have all members the same office. There is surely no contradiction in saying that a certain section of the community may be quite competent to protect the persons and property of the rest, yet quite unfit to direct our opinions, or to superintend our private habits.

So strong is the interest of a ruler to protect his subjects against all depredations and outrages except his own, so clear and simple are the means by which this end is to be effected, that men are probably better off under the worst governments in the world than they would be in a state of anarchy. Even when the appointment of magistrates has been left to chance,[2] as in the Italian Republics, things have gone on far better than if there had been no magistrates at all, and if every man had done what seemed right in his own eyes. But we see no reason for thinking that the opinions of the magistrate on speculative questions are more likely to be right than those of any other man. None of the modes by which a magistrate is appointed, popular election, the accident of the lot, or the accident of birth, affords, as far as we can perceive, much security for his being wiser than any of his neighbours. The chance of his being wiser than all his neighbours together is still smaller. Now we cannot understand how it can be laid down that it is the duty and the right of one class to direct the opinions of another, unless it can be proved that the former class is more likely to form just opinions than the latter.

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[1] The Military Knights of Windsor owe their origin to Edward III., each knight of the Order of the Garter founded by him being entitled to name one Alms Knight. Queen Elizabeth remodelled the foundation, took the nomination of members into her own hands and styled them the Knights of Windsor, a title modified by William IV. The persons nominated are veteran officers in straitened circumstances. They reside within the castle.

[2] In those cases in which recourse was had to election by lot.

The duties of government would be, as Mr. Southey says that they are, paternal, if a government were necessarily as much superior in wisdom to a people as the most foolish father, for a time, is to the most intelligent child, and if a government loved a people as fathers generally love their children. But there is no reason to believe that a government will have either the paternal warmth of affection or the paternal superiority of intellect. Mr. Southey might as well say that the duties of the shoemaker are paternal, and that it is an usurpation in any man not of the craft to say that his shoes are bad and to insist on having better. The division of labour would be no blessing, if those by whom a thing is done were to pay no attention to the opinion of those for whom it is done. The shoemaker, in the Relapse, tells Lord Foppington that his Lordship is mistaken in supposing that his shoe pinches. "It does not pinch; it cannot pinch; I know my business; and I never made a better shoe."[1] This is the way in which Mr. Southey would have a government treat a people who usurp the privilege of thinking. Nay, the shoemaker of Vanbrugh has the advantage in the comparison. He contented himself with regulating his customer's shoes, about which he had peculiar means of information, and did not presume to dictate about the coat and hat. But Mr. Southey would have the rulers of a country prescribe opinions to the people, not only about politics, but about matters concerning which a government has no peculiar sources of information, and concerning which any man in the streets may know as much and think as justly as the King, namely religion and morals.

Men are never so likely to settle a question rightly as when they discuss it freely. A government can interfere in discussion only by making it less free than it would otherwise be. Men are most likely to form just opinions when they have no other wish than to know the truth, and are exempt from all influence, either of hope or fear. Government, as government, can bring nothing but the influence of hopes and fears to support its doctrines. It carries on controversy, not with reasons, but with threats and bribes. If it employs reasons, it does so, not in virtue of any powers which belong to it as a government. Thus, instead of a contest between argument and argument, we have a contest between argument and force. Instead of a contest in which truth, from the natural constitution of the human mind, has a decided advantage over falsehood, we have a contest in which truth can be victorious only by accident.

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[1] Macaulay seems to have quoted Vanbrugh from memory, and therefore inaccurately.

LORD FOPPINGTON: "Why, wilt thou undertake to persuade me, I cannot feel?"

SHOEMAKER: "Your lordship may please to feel what you think fit; but that shoe does not hurt you; I think I understand my trade."

—"The Relapse," act i., scene 3.

And what, after all, is the security which this training gives to governments? Mr. Southey would scarcely propose that discussion should be more effectually shackled, that public opinion should be more strictly disciplined into conformity with established institutions, than in Spain and Italy. Yet we know that the restraints which exist in Spain and Italy have not prevented atheism from spreading among the educated classes, and especially among those whose office it is to minister at the altars of God. All our readers know how, at the time of the French Revolution, priest after priest came forward to declare that his doctrine, his ministry, his whole life, had been a lie, a mummery during which he could scarcely compose his countenance sufficiently to carry on the imposture. This was the case of a false, or at least of a grossly corrupted religion. Let us take then the case of all others most favourable to Mr. Southey's argument. Let us take that form of religion which he holds to be the purest, the system of the Arminian part of the Church of England. Let us take the form of government which he most admires and regrets, the government of England in the time of Charles the First. Would he wish to see a closer connection between church and state than then existed? Would he wish for more powerful ecclesiastical tribunals? for a more zealous king? for a more active primate? Would he wish to see a more complete monopoly of public instruction given to the Established Church? Could any government do more to train the people in the way in which he would have them go? And in what did all this training end? The Report of the state of the Province of Canterbury, delivered by Laud[1] to his master at the close of 1639, represents the Church of England as in the highest and most palmy state. So effectually had the government pursued that policy which Mr. Southey wishes to see revived that there was scarcely the least appearance of dissent. Most of the bishops stated that all was well among their flocks. Seven or eight persons in the diocese of Peterborough had seemed refractory to the church, but had made ample submission. In Norfolk and Suffolk all whom there had been reason to suspect had made profession of conformity, and appeared to observe it strictly. It is confessed that there was a little difficulty in bringing some of the vulgar in Suffolk to take the sacrament at the rails in the chancel. This was the only open instance of non-conformity which the vigilant eye of Laud could detect in all the dioceses of his twenty-one suffragans, on the very eve of a revolution in which primate, and church, and monarch, and monarchy were to perish together.

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[1] Laud, *Works*, vol. v., pt. ii.

At which time would Mr. Southey pronounce the constitution more secure: in 1639, when Laud presented this Report to Charles; or now, when thousands of meetings openly collect millions of dissenters, when designs against the tithes are openly avowed, when books attacking not only the Establishment, but the first principles of Christianity, are openly sold in the streets? The signs of discontent, he tells us, are stronger in England now than in France when the States-General met: and hence he would have us infer that a revolution like that of France may be at hand. Does he not know that the danger of states is to be estimated, not by what breaks out of the public mind, but by what stays in it? Can he conceive any thing more terrible than the situation of a government which rules without apprehension over a people of hypocrites, which is flattered by the press and cursed in the inner chambers, which exults in the attachment and obedience of its subjects, and knows not that those subjects are leagued against it in a free-masonry of hatred, the sign of which is every day conveyed in the glance of ten thousand eyes, the pressure of ten thousand hands, and the tone of ten thousand voices? Profound and ingenious policy! Instead of curing the disease, to remove those symptoms by which alone its nature can be known! To leave the serpent his deadly sting, and deprive him only of his warning rattle!

When the people whom Charles had so assiduously trained in the good way had rewarded his paternal care by cutting off his head, a new kind of training came into fashion. Another government arose which, like the former, considered religion as its surest basis, and the religious discipline of the people as its first duty. Sanguinary laws were enacted against libertinism; profane pictures were burned; drapery was put on indecorous statues; the theatres were shut up; fast-days were numerous; and the

Parliament resolved that no person should be admitted into any public employment, unless the House should be first satisfied of his vital godliness.[1] We know what was the end of this training. We know that it ended in impiety, in filthy and heartless sensuality, in the dissolution of all ties of honour and morality. We know that at this very day scriptural phrases, scriptural names, perhaps some scriptural doctrines, excite disgust and ridicule, solely because they are associated with the austerity of that period.

Thus has the experiment of training the people in established forms of religion been twice tried in England on a large scale, once by Charles and Laud, and once by the Puritans. The High Tories of our time still entertain many of the feelings and opinions of Charles and Laud, though in a mitigated form; nor is it difficult to see that the heirs of the Puritans are still amongst us. It would be desirable that each of these parties should remember how little advantage or honour it formerly derived from the closest alliance with power, that it fell by the support of rulers and rose by their opposition, that of the two systems that in which the people were at any time drilled was always at that time the unpopular system, that the training of the High Church ended in the reign of the Puritans, and that the training of the Puritans ended in the reign of the harlots.

This was quite natural. Nothing is so galling to a people not broken in from the birth as a paternal, or, in other words, a meddling government, a government which tells them what to read, and say, and eat, and drink, and wear. Our fathers could not bear it two hundred years ago; and we are not more patient than they. Mr. Southey thinks that the yoke of the Church is dropping off because it is loose. We feel convinced that it is borne only because it is easy, and that, in the instant in which an attempt is made to tighten it, it will be flung away. It will be neither the first nor the strongest yoke that has been broken asunder and trampled under foot in the day of the vengeance of England.

How far Mr. Southey would have the government carry its measures for training the people in the doctrines of the Church, we are unable to discover. In one passage Sir Thomas More asks with great vehemence,

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[1] The assembly commonly known as Barebone's Parliament passed on the 7th July, 1653, a resolution that no person should be employed in its service unless it were first satisfied of his real godliness (Gardiner, *History of the Commonwealth and Protectorate*, ii., 238).

"Is it possible that your laws should suffer the unbelievers to exist as a party? Vetitum est adeo sceleris nihil?"

Montesinos answers. "They avow themselves in defiance of the laws. The fashionable doctrine which the press at this time maintains is, that this is a matter in which the laws ought not to interfere, every man having a right, both to form what opinion he pleases upon religious subjects, and to promulgate that opinion."[1]

It is clear, therefore, that Mr. Southey would not give full and perfect toleration to infidelity. In another passage, however, he observes with some truth, though too sweepingly, that "any degree of intolerance short of that full extent which the Papal Church exercises where it has the power, acts upon the opinions which it is intended to suppress, like pruning upon vigorous plants; they grow the stronger for it." These two passages, put together, would lead us to the conclusion that, in Mr. Southey's opinion, the utmost severity ever employed by the Roman Catholic Church in the days of its greatest power ought to be employed against unbelievers in England; in plain words, that Carlile and his shopmen ought to be burned in Smithfield, and that every person who, when called upon, should decline to make a solemn profession of Christianity ought to suffer the same fate. We do not, however, believe that Mr. Southey would recommend such a course, though his language would, according to all the rules of logic, justify us in supposing this to be his meaning. His opinions form no system at all. He never sees, at one glance, more of a question than will furnish matter for one flowing and well turned sentence; so that it would be the height of unfairness to charge him personally with holding a doctrine merely because that doctrine is deducible, though by the closest and most accurate reasoning, from the premises which he has laid down. We are, therefore, left completely in the dark as to Mr. Southey's opinions about toleration. Immediately after censuring the government for not punishing infidels, he proceeds to discuss the question of the Catholic disabilities, now, thank God, removed, and defends them on the ground that the Catholic doctrines tend to persecution, and that the Catholics persecuted when they had power.

"They must persecute," says he, "if they believe their own creed, for conscience-sake; and if they do not believe it, they must persecute for policy; because it is only by intolerance that so corrupt and injurious a system can be upheld."[2]

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[1] *Colloquies*, i., p. 253.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 257.

That unbelievers should not be persecuted is an instance of national depravity at which the glorified spirits stand aghast. Yet a sect of Christians is to be excluded from power, because those who formerly held the same opinions were guilty of persecution. We have said that we do not very well know what Mr. Southey's opinion about toleration is. But, on the whole, we take it to be this, that everybody is to tolerate him, and that he is to tolerate nobody.

We will not be deterred by any fear of misrepresentation from expressing our hearty approbation of the mild, wise, and eminently Christian manner in which the Church and the Government have lately acted with respect to blasphemous publications. We praise them for not having thought it necessary to encircle a religion pure, merciful, and philosophical, a religion to the evidence of which the highest intellects have yielded, with the defences of a false and bloody superstition. The ark of God was never taken till it was surrounded by the arms of earthly defenders. In captivity, its sanctity was sufficient to vindicate it from insult, and to lay the hostile fiend prostrate on the threshold of his own temple. The real security of Christianity is to be found in its benevolent morality, in its exquisite adaptation to the human heart, in the facility with which its scheme accommodates itself to the capacity of every human intellect, in the consolation which it bears to the house of mourning, in the light with which it brightens the great mystery of the grave. To such a system it can bring no addition of dignity or of strength, that it is part and parcel of the common law. It is not now for the first time left to rely on the force of its own evidences and the attractions of its own beauty. Its sublime theology confounded the Grecian schools in the fair conflict of reason with reason. The bravest and wisest of the Cæsars found their arms and their policy unavailing, when opposed to the weapons that were not carnal and the kingdom that was not of this world. The victory which Porphyry[1] and Diocletian[2] failed to gain is not, to all appearance, reserved for any of those who have, in this age, directed their attacks against the last restraint of the powerful and the last hope of the wretched. The whole history of Christianity shows, that she is in far greater danger of being corrupted by the alliance of power, than of being crushed by its opposition. Those who thrust temporal sovereignty upon her treat her as their prototypes treated her author. They bow the knee, and spit upon her; they cry "Hail!" and smite her on the cheek; they put a sceptre in her hand, but it is a fragile reed; they crown her, but it is with thorns; they cover with purple the wounds which their own hands have inflicted on her; and inscribe magnificent titles over the cross on which they have fixed her to perish in ignominy and pain.

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[1] Porphyrius, 233-303, was one of the most eminent of the Neo-Platonic school of philosophers who tried to give new spiritual significance to old myths, and opposed a mystical version of paganism to Christianity. Porphyry himself wrote an attack upon the Christian religion which we may infer to have been able from the frequency with which it was cited by Christian apologists and by the pains taken by the Christian Emperors to destroy every copy.

[2] The Emperor Diocletian ascended the throne in A.D. 284 and abdicated in A.D. 304. He reorganised the empire, but is more widely known as having sanctioned the last persecution of the Christians.

The general view which Mr. Southey takes of the prospects of society is very gloomy; but we comfort ourselves with the consideration that Mr. Southey is no prophet. He foretold, we remember, on the very eve of the abolition of the Test and Corporation Acts, that these hateful laws were immortal, and that pious minds would long be gratified by seeing the most solemn religious rite of the Church profaned for the purpose of upholding her political supremacy. In the book before us, he says that Catholics cannot possibly be admitted into Parliament until those whom Johnson called "the bottomless Whigs"[1] come into power. While the book was in the press, the prophecy was falsified; and a Tory of the Tories,[2] Mr. Southey's own favourite hero, won and wore that noblest wreath, "Ob cives servatos."[3]

The signs of the times, Mr. Southey tells us, are very threatening. His fears for the country would decidedly preponderate over his hopes, but for his firm reliance on the mercy of God. Now, as we know that God has once suffered the civilised world to be overrun by savages, and the Christian religion to be corrupted by doctrines which made it, for some ages, almost as bad as Paganism, we cannot think it inconsistent with his attributes that similar calamities should again befal mankind.

We look, however, on the state of the world, and of this kingdom in particular, with much greater satisfaction and with better hopes. Mr. Southey speaks with contempt of those who think the savage state happier than the social. On this subject, he says, Rousseau never imposed on him even in his youth. But he conceives that a community which has advanced a little way in civilisation is happier than one which has made greater progress. The Britons in the time of Cæsar were happier, he suspects, than the English of the nineteenth century. On the whole, he selects the generation which preceded the Reformation as that in which the people of this country were better off than at any time before or since.

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[1] Johnson said to Boswell concerning a common friend whom they valued highly (probably Burke), "Sir, he is a cursed Whig, a bottomless Whig, as they all are now" (Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, year 1783).

[2] The Duke of Wellington, Prime Minister in 1829.

[3] The wreath of oak leaves presented to the Roman soldier who had saved the life of a fellow-citizen in battle was accompanied with this inscription. Macaulay here expresses the belief very general at the time that Catholic Emancipation had averted civil war.

This opinion rests on nothing, as far as we can see, except his own individual associations. He is a man of letters; and a life destitute of literary pleasures seems insipid to him. He abhors the spirit of the present generation, the severity of its studies, the boldness of its inquiries, and the disdain with which it regards some old prejudices by which his own mind is held in bondage. He dislikes an utterly unenlightened age; he dislikes an investigating and reforming age. The first twenty years of the sixteenth century would have exactly suited him. They furnished just the quantity of intellectual excitement which he requires. The learned few read and wrote largely. A scholar was held in high estimation. But the rabble did not presume to think; and even the most inquiring and independent of the educated classes paid more reverence to authority, and less to reason, than is usual in our time. This is a state of things in which Mr. Southey would have found himself quite comfortable; and, accordingly, he pronounces it the happiest state of things ever known in the world.

The savages were wretched, says Mr. Southey; but the people in the time of Sir Thomas More were happier than either they or we. Now we think it quite certain that we have the advantage over the contemporaries of Sir Thomas More, in every point in which they had any advantage over savages.

Mr. Southey does not even pretend to maintain that the people in the sixteenth century were better lodged or clothed than at present. He seems to admit that in these respects there has been some little improvement. It is indeed a matter about which scarcely any doubt can exist in the most perverse mind that the improvements of machinery have lowered the price of manufactured articles, and have brought within the reach of the poorest some conveniences which Sir Thomas More or his master could not have obtained at any price.

The labouring classes, however, were, according to Mr.

Southey, better fed three hundred years ago than at present.[1] We believe that he is completely in error on this point. The condition of servants in noble and wealthy families, and of scholars at the Universities, must surely have been better in those times than that of day-labourers; and we are sure that it was not better than that of our workhouse paupers. From the household book of the Northumberland family,[2] we find that in one of the greatest establishments of the kingdom the servants lived very much as common sailors live now. In the reign of Edward the Sixth the state of the students at Cambridge is described to us, on the very best authority, as most wretched. Many of them dined on pottage made of a farthing's worth of beef with a little salt and oatmeal, and literally nothing else. This account we have from a contemporary master of St. John's.[3] Our parish poor now eat wheaten bread. In the sixteenth century the labourer was glad to get barley, and was often forced to content himself with poorer fare. In Harrison's introduction to Hollinshed we have an account of the state of our working population in the "golden days," as Mr. Southey calls them, "of good Queen Bess." "The gentilitie," says he, "commonly provide themselves sufficiently of wheat for their own tables, whylest their household and poore neighbours in some shires are inforced to content themselves with rye or barleie; yea, and in time of dearth, many with bread made eyther of beanes, peason, or otes, or of altogether, and some acornes among. I will not say that this extremity is oft so well to be seen in time of plentie as of dearth; but if I should I could easily bring my trial: for albeit there be much more grounde eared nowe almost in everye place then hathe beene of late yeares, yet such a price of corne continueth in eache towne and markete, without any just cause, that the artificer and poore labouring man is not able to reach unto it, but is driven to content himself with horse-corne."[1] We should like to see what the effect would be of putting any parish in England now on allowance of "horse-corne." The helotry of Mammon are not, in our day, so easily enforced to content themselves as the peasantry of that happy period, as Mr. Southey considers it, which elapsed between the fall of the feudal and the rise of the commercial tyranny.

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[1] Southey's opinion has been partly adopted by writers who knew much more about the subject, *e.g.*, Thorold Rogers in his *History of Agriculture and Prices.*

Macaulay does not take account of the fact that happiness largely turns on being able to live according to the standard which at any particular time is thought sufficient. Well-being is a relative term, and content or discontent largely the effect of a comparison between one's own lot and that of others.

[2] *The Regulations and Establishment of the Household of Henry Algernon Percy, the Fifth Earl of Northumberland, at His Castles of Wressill and Lekinfield in Yorkshire*, begun A.D. 1512, edited by Dr. Thomas Percy and published in 1770. This book contains a mass of minute information as to the domestic economy of that time.

[3] Macaulay refers to a passage in a sermon of Thomas Lever, master of St. John's College. Mr. Mullinger, in his *University of Cambridge from the Earliest Times* (i., 371), remarks that in the reign of Edward VI. one farthing would probably buy half a pound of meat, so that the dinner was fairly substantial.

"The people," says Mr. Southey, "are worse fed than when they were fishers." And yet in another place he complains that they will not eat fish. "They have contracted," says he, "I know not how, some obstinate prejudice against a kind of food at once wholesome and delicate, and every where to be obtained cheaply and in abundance, were the demand for it as general as it ought to be."[2] It is true that the lower orders have an obstinate prejudice against fish. But hunger has no such obstinate prejudices. If what was formerly a common diet is now eaten only in times of severe pressure, the inference is plain. The people must be fed with what they at least think better food than that of their ancestors.

The advice and medicine which the poorest labourer can now obtain, in disease, or after an accident, is far superior to what Henry the Eighth could have commanded. Scarcely any part of the country is out of the reach of practitioners who are probably not so far inferior to Sir Henry Halford[3] as they are superior to Dr. Butts.[4] That there has been a great improvement in this respect, Mr. Southey allows. Indeed he could not well have denied it. "But," says he, "the evils for which these sciences are the palliative, have increased since the time of the Druids, in a proportion that heavily overweighs the benefit of improved therapeutics."[5] We know nothing either of the diseases or the remedies of the Druids. But we are quite sure that the improvement of medicine has far more than kept pace with the increase of disease during the last three centuries. This is proved by the best possible evidence. The term of human life is decidedly longer in England than in any former age, respecting which we possess any information on which we can rely. All the rants in the world about picturesque cottages and temples of Mammon will not shake this argument. No test of the physical well-being of society can be named so decisive as that which is furnished by bills of mortality. That the lives of the people of this country have been gradually lengthening during the course of several generations, is as certain as any fact in statistics; and that the lives of men should become longer and longer, while their bodily condition during life is becoming worse and worse, is utterly incredible.

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[1] "By horse-corne," Harrison says, "I mean beanes, peason, otes, tares and lintels" (*Description of Britain*, bk. ii., ch. vi., "Of the Food and Diet of the English").

[2] *Colloquies*, i., p. 175.

[3] Sir Henry Halford, 1766-1844, was the most fashionable doctor of his day. He was appointed one of the royal physicians in 1793, an office which he continued to hold under George IV., William IV. and Queen Victoria. He was also chosen to be President of the Royal College of Physicians in 1820.

[4] Sir William Butts, died 1545, was physician to Henry VIII. He is one of the minor characters in the play of "Henry VIII." (act v., scene 2).

[5] *Colloquies*, i., p. 57.

Let our readers think over these circumstances. Let them take into the account the sweating sickness and the plague. Let them take into the account that fearful disease which first made its appearance in the generation to which Mr. Southey assigns the palm of felicity, and raged through Europe with a fury at which the physician stood aghast, and before which the people were swept away by myriads. Let them consider the state of the northern counties, constantly the scene of robberies, rapes, massacres, and conflagrations. Let them add to all this the fact that seventy-two thousand persons suffered death by the hands of the executioner during the reign of Henry the Eighth, and judge between the nineteenth and the sixteenth century.[1]

We do not say that the lower orders in England do not suffer severe hardships. But, in spite of Mr. Southey's assertions, and in spite of the assertions of a class of politicians, who, differing from Mr. Southey in every other point, agree with him in this,[2] we are inclined to doubt whether the labouring classes here really suffer greater physical distress than the labouring classes of the most flourishing countries of the Continent.

It will scarcely be maintained that the lazzaroni who sleep under the porticoes of Naples, or the beggars who besiege the convents of Spain, are in a happier situation than the English commonalty. The distress which has lately been experienced in the northern part of Germany, one of the best governed and most prosperous regions of Europe, surpasses, if we have been correctly informed, any thing which has of late years been known among us. In Norway and Sweden the peasantry are constantly compelled to mix bark with their bread; and even this expedient has not always preserved whole families and neighbourhoods from perishing together of famine. An experiment has lately been tried in the kingdom of the Netherlands, which has been cited to prove the possibility of establishing agricultural colonies on the waste lands of England, but which proves to our minds nothing so clearly as this, that the rate of subsistence to which the labouring classes are reduced in the Netherlands is miserably low, and very far inferior to that of the English paupers. No distress which the people here have endured for centuries approaches to that which has been felt by the French in our own time. The beginning of the year 1817 was a time of great distress in this island. But the state of the lowest classes here was luxury compared with that of the people of France. We find in Magendie's "Journal de Physiologie Expérimentale," a paper on a point of physiology connected with the distress of that season. It appears that the inhabitants of six departments, Aix, Jura, Doubs, Haute Saone, Vosges, and Saone-et-Loire, were reduced first to oatmeal and potatoes, and at last to nettles, bean-stalks, and other kinds of herbage fit only for cattle; that when the next harvest enabled them to eat barley-bread, many of them died from intemperate indulgence in what they thought an exquisite repast; and that a dropsy of a peculiar description was produced by the hard fare of the year. Dead bodies were found on the roads and in the fields. A single surgeon dissected six of these, and found the stomach shrunk, and filled with the unwholesome aliments which hunger had driven men to share with beasts. Such extremity of distress as this is never heard of in England, or even in Ireland. We are, on the whole, inclined to think, though we would speak with diffidence on a point on which it would be rash to pronounce a positive judgment without a much longer and closer investigation than we have bestowed upon it, that the labouring classes of this island, though they have their grievances and distresses, some produced by their own improvidence, some by the errors of their rulers, are on the whole better off as to physical comforts than the inhabitants of any equally extensive district of the old world. For this very reason, suffering is more acutely felt and more loudly bewailed here than elsewhere. We must take into the account the liberty of discussion, and the strong interest which the opponents of a ministry always have to exaggerate the extent of the public disasters. There are countries in which the people quietly endure distress that here would shake the foundations of the state, countries in which the inhabitants of a whole province turn out to eat grass with less clamour than one Spitalfields weaver would make here, if the overseers were to put him on barley-bread. In those new commonwealths in which a civilised population has at its command a boundless extent of the richest soil, the condition of the labourer is probably happier than in any society which has lasted for many centuries. But in the old world we must confess ourselves unable to find any satisfactory record of any great nation, past or present, in which the working classes have been in a more comfortable situation than in England during the last thirty years. When this island was thinly peopled, it was barbarous: there was little capital; and that little was insecure. It is now the richest and the most highly civilised spot in the world; but the population is dense. Thus we have never known that golden age which the lower orders in the United States are now enjoying. We have never known an age of liberty, of order, and of education, an age in which the mechanical sciences were carried to a great height, yet in which the people were not sufficiently numerous to cultivate even the most fertile valleys. But, when we compare our own condition with that of our ancestors, we think it clear that the advantages arising from the progress of civilisation have far more than counterbalanced the disadvantages arising from the progress of population. While our numbers have increased tenfold, our wealth has increased a hundredfold. Though there are so many more people to share the wealth now existing in the country than there were in the sixteenth century, it seems certain that a greater share falls to almost every individual than fell to the share of any of the corresponding class in the sixteenth century. The King keeps a more splendid court. The establishments of the nobles are more magnificent. The esquires are richer; the merchants are richer; the shopkeepers are richer. The serving-man, the artisan, and the husbandman, have a more copious and palatable supply of food, better clothing, and better furniture. This is no reason for tolerating abuses, or for neglecting any means of ameliorating the condition of our poorer countrymen. But it is a reason against telling them, as some of our philosophers are constantly telling them, that they are the most wretched people who ever existed on the face of the earth.

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[1] This statement is not incredible when we remember how many offences were then capital. But it has been challenged by Froude in his *History of England*, ch. xvi., as resting upon no sufficient authority, and it cannot be accepted as trustworthy. The tendency of writers who lived before the age of statistics was to exaggerate all figures.

[2] Macaulay perhaps refers to Thomas Attwood and William Cobbett, who mingled with their radicalism a regret for what they regarded as the happier past.

We have already adverted to Mr. Southey's amusing doctrine about national wealth. A state, says he, cannot be too rich; but a people may be too rich. His reason for thinking this is extremely curious.

"A people may be too rich, because it is the tendency of the commercial, and more especially of the manufacturing system, to collect wealth rather than to diffuse it. Where wealth is necessarily employed in any of the speculations of trade, its increase is in proportion to its amount. Great capitalists become like pikes in a fish-pond who devour the weaker fish; and it is but too certain, that the poverty of one part of the people seems to increase in the same ratio as the riches of another. There are examples of this in history. In Portugal, when the high tide of wealth flowed in from the conquests in Africa and the East, the effect of that great influx was not more visible in the augmented splendour of the court, and the luxury of the higher ranks, than in the distress of the people."[1]

Mr. Southey's instance is not a very fortunate one. The wealth which did so little for the Portuguese was not the fruit either of manufactures or of commerce carried on by private individuals. It was the wealth, not of the people, but of the government and its creatures, of those who, as Mr. Southey thinks, can never be too rich. The fact is, that Mr. Southey's proposition is opposed to all history, and to the phænomena which surround us on every side. England is the richest country in Europe, the most commercial country, and the country in which manufactures flourish most. Russia and Poland are the poorest countries in Europe. They have scarcely any trade, and none but the rudest manufactures. Is wealth more diffused in Russia and Poland than in England? There are individuals in Russia and Poland whose incomes are probably equal to those of our richest countrymen. It may be doubted whether there are not, in those countries, as many fortunes of eighty thousand a year as here. But are there as many fortunes of two thousand a year, or of one thousand a year? There are parishes in England which contain more people of between three hundred and three thousand pounds a year than could be found in all the dominions of the Emperor Nicholas. The neat and commodious houses which have been built in London and its vicinity, for people of this class, within the last thirty years, would of themselves form a city larger than the capitals of some European kingdoms. And this is the state of society in which the great proprietors have devoured a smaller![1]

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[1] *Colloquies*, i., p. 194.

The cure which Mr. Southey thinks that he has discovered is worthy of the sagacity which he has shown in detecting the evil. The calamities arising from the collection of wealth in the hands of a few capitalists are to be remedied by collecting it in the hands of one great capitalist, who has no conceivable motive to use it better than other capitalists, the all-devouring state.

It is not strange that, differing so widely from Mr. Southey as to the past progress of society, we should differ from him also as to its probable destiny. He thinks, that to all outward appearance, the country is hastening to destruction; but he relies firmly on the goodness of God. We do not see either the piety or the rationality of thus confidently expecting that the Supreme Being will interfere to disturb the common succession of causes and effects. We, too, rely on his goodness, on his goodness as manifested, not in extraordinary interpositions, but in those general laws which it has pleased him to establish in the physical and in the moral world. We rely on the natural tendency of the human intellect to truth, and on the natural tendency of society to improvement. We know no well authenticated instance of a people which has decidedly retrograded in civilisation and prosperity, except from the influence of violent and terrible calamities, such as those which laid the Roman empire in ruins, or those which, about the beginning of the sixteenth century, desolated Italy. We know of no country which, at the end of fifty years of peace and tolerably good government, has been less prosperous than at the beginning of that period. The political importance of a state may decline, as the balance of power is disturbed by the introduction of new forces. Thus the influence of Holland and of Spain is much diminished. But are Holland and Spain poorer than formerly? We doubt it. Other countries have outrun them. But we suspect that they have been positively, though not relatively, advancing. We suspect that Holland is richer than when she sent her navies up the Thames, that Spain is richer than when a French king was brought captive to the footstool of Charles the Fifth.

History is full of the signs of this natural progress of society. We see in almost every part of the annals of mankind how the industry of individuals, struggling up against wars, taxes, famines, conflagrations, mischievous prohibitions, and more mischievous protections, creates faster than governments can squander, and repairs whatever invaders can destroy. We see the wealth of nations increasing, and all the arts of life approaching nearer and nearer to perfection, in spite of the grossest corruption and the wildest profusion on the part of rulers.[1]

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[1] Here Macaulay has a decided advantage. The statement that in England the rich are growing richer and the poor poorer has been often repeated since it was made by Southey, but appears to be against the whole weight of evidence.

The present moment is one of great distress. But how small will that distress appear when we think over the history of the last forty years; a war, compared with which all other wars sink into insignificance; taxation, such as the most heavily taxed people of former times could not have conceived;[2] a debt larger than all the public debts that ever existed in the world added together; the food of the people studiously rendered dear;[3] the currency imprudently debased,[4] and imprudently restored.[5] Yet is the country poorer than in 1790? We firmly believe that, in spite of all the misgovernment of her rulers, she has been almost constantly becoming richer and richer. Now and then there has been a stoppage, now and then a short retrogression; but as to the general tendency there can be no doubt. A single breaker may recede; but the tide is evidently coming in.

If we were to prophesy that in the year 1930 a population of fifty millions, better fed, clad, and lodged than the English of our time, will cover these islands, that Sussex and Huntingdonshire will be wealthier than the wealthiest parts of the West Riding of Yorkshire now are, that cultivation, rich as that of a flower-garden, will be carried up to the very tops of Ben Nevis and Helvellyn, that machines constructed on principles yet undiscovered will be in every house, that there will be no highways but railroads, no travelling but by steam, that our debt, vast as it seems to us, will appear to our great grandchildren a trifling encumbrance, which might easily be paid off in a year or two, many people would think us insane.[1] We prophesy nothing; but this we say: if any person had told the Parliament which met in perplexity and terror after the crash in 1720[2] that in 1830 the wealth of England would surpass all their wildest dreams, that the annual revenue would equal the principal of that debt which they considered as an intolerable burden, that for one man of ten thousand pounds then living there would be five men of fifty thousand pounds, that London would be twice as large and twice as populous, and that nevertheless the rate of mortality would have diminished to one half of what it then was, that the post-office would bring more into the exchequer than the excise and customs had brought in together under Charles the Second, that stage-coaches would run from London to York in twenty-four hours, that men would be in the habit of sailing without wind, and would be beginning to ride without horses, our ancestors would have given as much credit to the prediction as they gave to Gulliver's Travels. Yet the prediction would have been true; and they would have perceived that it was not altogether absurd, if they had considered that the country was then raising every year a sum which would have purchased the fee-simple of the revenue of the Plantagenets, ten times what supported the government of Elizabeth, three times what, in the time of Oliver Cromwell, had been thought intolerably oppressive. To almost all men the state of things under which they have been used to live seems to be the necessary state of things. We have heard it said that five per cent. is the natural interest of money, that twelve is the natural number of a jury, that forty shillings is the natural qualification of a county voter. Hence it is that, though in every age every body knows that up to his own time progressive improvement has been taking place, nobody seems to reckon on any improvement during the next generation. We cannot absolutely prove that those are in error who tell us that society has reached a turning point, that we have seen our best days. But so said all who came before us, and with just as much apparent reason. "A million a year will beggar us," said the patriots of 1640. "Two millions a year will grind the country to powder," was the cry in 1660. "Six millions a year, and a debt of fifty millions!" exclaimed Swift, "the high allies have been the ruin of us."[1] "A hundred and forty millions of debt!" said Junius; "well may we say that we owe Lord Chatham more than we shall ever pay, if we owe him such a load as this."[2] "Two hundred and forty millions of debt!" cried all the statesmen of 1783 in chorus; "what abilities, or what economy on the part of a minister, can save a country so burdened?" We know that if, since 1783, no fresh debt had been incurred, the increased resources of the country would have enabled us to defray that debt at which Pitt, Fox, and Burke stood aghast, nay, to defray it over and over again, and that with much lighter taxation than what we have actually borne. On what principle is it that, when we see nothing but improvement behind us, we are to expect nothing but deterioration before us?

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[1] Few writers of Macaulay's capacity would now express so dogmatic a belief in the necessity of even material progress. National prosperity and civilisation may be undermined by slow as well as shattered by violent agencies. They must in the last resort depend upon national vigour, and the so-called decline or decadence of nations is a very subtle phenomenon which has never been adequately studied and is very little understood.

[2] Greater, that is, in the amount produced; certainly not more severe than had ever been known before.

[3] A reference to the Corn Law of 1815.

[4] A reference to the suspension of cash payments in 1797.

[5] A reference to the resumption of cash payments in 1819. Macaulay's censure may partly be explained by the fact that both the suspension and the resumption were acts of a Tory Ministry.

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[1] Some portions of this suggested prophecy are unlikely to be fulfilled. Cultivation instead of climbing Ben Nevis has threatened to forsake Essex, and the taxpayers of 1930 will hardly be prepared to devote £800,000,000 to the Sinking Fund.

[2] After the collapse of the South Sea Bubble.

It is not, by the intermeddling of Mr. Southey's idol, the omniscient and omnipotent State, but by the prudence and energy of the people, that England has hitherto been carried forward in civilisation; and it is to the same prudence and the same energy that we now look with comfort and good hope. Our rulers will best promote the improvement of the nation by strictly confining themselves to their own legitimate duties, by leaving capital to find its most lucrative course, commodities their fair price, industry and intelligence their natural reward, idleness and folly their natural punishment, by maintaining peace, by defending property, by diminishing the price of law, and by observing strict economy in every department of the state. Let the Government do this: the People will assuredly do the rest.

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[1] These words are not exactly quoted from Swift, but they sum up the main argument of his most famous political pamphlet, *The Conduct of the Allies.*

[2] This again is not an exact quotation. "Now, Mr. Woodfall, I entirely agree with Mr. Macaroni that this country does owe more to Lord Chatham than it can ever repay, for to him we owe the greatest part of our national debt, and that, I am sure, we can never repay" (*Miscellaneous Letters*, ascribed to Junius).

MR. ROBERT MONTGOMERY

April, 1830

NOTE ON THE ESSAY

THE essay on Robert Montgomery's poems adds nothing to Macaulay's reputation and might have been allowed to drop out of his collected works. Literary criticism can be of lasting value only when it concerns itself with what is truly literary. A "slashing" attack upon a fourth-rate author merely excites or amuses for the moment. It may indeed hasten the inevitable hour when that which does not deserve to live must perish, but it cannot suppress puffing or extirpate charlatanism. As Horace Walpole remarked, it is no use to cure mankind of a folly unless you could cure them of foolishness. Although an empty and pretentious writer may deserve to be exposed in a review as richly as a rogue may deserve to be set in a pillory, a man of genius is almost as unworthily employed in reviling the one as in pelting the other. Serenely to ignore what is worthless and to fix his own attention and the attention of others upon what is precious—this is the wisdom of a critic as well as the instinct of a humane nature. Montgomery had sense enough to be pained by the sort of fame which the following review gave him and begged for its suppression; a favour which Macaulay would have done well to grant.

MR. ROBERT MONTGOMERY

1. *The Omnipresence of the Deity: a Poem.* By Robert Montgomery. Eleventh Edition. London: 1830.
2. *Satan: a Poem.* By Robert Montgomery. Second Edition. London: 1830.

THE wise men of antiquity loved to convey instruction under the covering of apologue; and though this practice is generally thought childish, we shall make no apology for adopting it on the present occasion. A generation which has bought eleven editions of a poem by Mr. Robert Montgomery may well condescend to listen to a fable of Pilpay.[1]

A pious Brahmin, it is written, made a vow that on a certain day he would sacrifice a sheep, and on the appointed morning he went forth to buy one. There lived in his neighbourhood three rogues who knew of his vow, and laid a scheme for profiting by it. The first met him and said, "Oh Brahmin, wilt thou buy a sheep? I have one fit for sacrifice." "It is for that very purpose," said the holy man, "that I came forth this day." Then the impostor opened a bag, and brought out of it an unclean beast, an ugly dog, lame and blind. Thereon the Brahmin cried out, "Wretch, who touchest things impure, and utterest things untrue, callest thou that cur a sheep?" "Truly," answered the other, "it is a sheep of the finest fleece, and of the sweetest flesh. Oh Brahmin, it will be an offering most acceptable to the gods." "Friend," said the Brahmin, "either thou or I must be blind."

Just then one of the accomplices came up. "Praised be the gods," said this second rogue, "that I have been saved the trouble of going to the market for a sheep! This is such a sheep as I wanted. For how much wilt thou sell it?" When the Brahmin heard this, his mind waved to and fro, like one swinging in the air at a holy festival. "Sir," said he to the new comer, "take heed what thou dost; this is no sheep, but an unclean cur." "Oh Brahmin," said the new comer, "thou art drunk or mad!"

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[1] Pilpay, or more correctly Bidpai, is the supposed author of a celebrated collection of Hindu fables of great antiquity which has been translated into many languages. Nothing is known about him.

At this time the third confederate drew near. "Let us ask this man," said the Brahmin, "what the creature is, and I will stand by what he shall say." To this the others agreed; and the Brahmin called out, "Oh stranger, what dost thou call this beast?" "Surely, oh Brahmin," said the knave, "it is a fine sheep." Then the Brahmin said, "Surely the gods have taken away my senses;" and he asked pardon of him who carried the dog, and bought it for a measure of rice and a pot of ghee, and offered it up to the gods, who, being wroth at this unclean sacrifice, smote him with a sore disease in all his joints.

Thus, or nearly thus, if we remember rightly, runs the story of the Sanscrit Æsop. The moral, like the moral of every fable that is worth the telling, lies on the surface. The writer evidently means to caution us against the practices of puffers, a class of people who have more than once talked the public into the most absurd errors, but who surely never played a more curious or a more difficult trick than when they passed Mr. Robert Montgomery off upon the world as a great poet.

In an age in which there are so few readers that a writer cannot subsist on the sum arising from the sale of his works, no man who has not an independent fortune can devote himself to literary pursuits, unless he is assisted by patronage. In such an age, accordingly, men of letters too often pass their lives in dangling at the heels of the wealthy and powerful; and all the faults which dependence tends to produce, pass into their character. They become the parasites and slaves of the great. It is melancholy to think how many of the highest and most exquisitely formed of human intellects have been condemned to the ignominious labour of disposing the commonplaces of adulation in new forms and brightening them into new splendour. Horace invoking Augustus in the most enthusiastic language of religious veneration; Statius[1] flattering a tyrant, and the minion of a tyrant, for a morsel of bread; Ariosto versifying the whole genealogy of a niggardly patron;[2] Tasso extolling the heroic virtues of the wretched creature[1] who locked him up in a mad-house: these are but a few of the instances which might easily be given of the degradation to which those must submit who, not possessing a competent fortune, are resolved to write when there are scarcely any who read.[2]

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[1] Publius Papinianus Statius flourished in the latter part of the first century A.D. Besides a number of occasional poems known as *Silvæ*, he wrote an epic poem on the story of Thebes. The tyrant whom he flattered was Domitian, and the minion was Earinus, a favourite eunuch of the emperor.

[2] The niggardly patron was the Cardinal Ippolito d'Este, son of Hercules I., Duke of Ferrara. The versified pedigree will be found in the *Orlando Furioso*, canto 3.

This evil the progress of the human mind tends to remove. As a taste for books becomes more and more common, the patronage of individuals becomes less and less necessary. In the middle of the last century a marked change took place. The tone of literary men, both in this country and in France, became higher and more independent. Pope boasted that he was the "one poet" who had "pleased by manly way;"[3] he derided the soft dedications with which Halifax had been fed,[4] asserted his own superiority over the pensioned Boileau,[5] and gloried in being not the follower, but the friend, of nobles and princes.[6] The explanation of all this is very simple. Pope was the first Englishman who, by the mere sale of his writings, realised a sum which enabled him to live in comfort and in perfect independence.[7] Johnson extols him for the magnanimity which he showed in inscribing his Iliad, not to a minister or a peer, but to Congreve.[1] In our time this would scarcely be a subject for praise. Nobody is astonished when Mr. Moore pays a compliment of this kind to Sir Walter Scott, or Sir Walter Scott to Mr. Moore. The idea of either of those gentlemen looking out for some lord who would be likely to give him a few guineas in return for a fulsome dedication seems laughably incongruous. Yet this is exactly what Dryden or Otway[2] would have done; and it would be hard to blame them for it. Otway is said to have been choked with a piece of bread which he devoured in the rage of hunger; and, whether this story be true or false, he was beyond all question miserably poor. Dryden, at near seventy, when at the head of the literary men of England, without equal or second, received three hundred pounds for his Fables,[3] a collection of ten thousand verses, and of such verses as no man then living, except himself, could have produced. Pope, at thirty, had laid up between six and seven thousand pounds, the fruits of his poetry. It was not, we suspect, because he had a higher spirit or a more scrupulous conscience than his predecessors, but because he had a larger income, that he kept up the dignity of the literary character so much better than they had done.

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[1] The wretched creature was Alfonso II., Duke of Ferrara, who had once been Tasso's patron. But there was some excuse for his cruelty.

[2] A characteristic exaggeration. Neither of Horace, nor of Statius, nor of Ariosto, nor of Tasso, could it be said with even a remote approach to truth that they wrote when there were scarcely any to read.

[3] "Not proud, nor servile; be one poet's praise,
That, if he pleased, he pleased by manly ways."
—*Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*, lines 336-337.

[4] "Proud as Apollo on his forked hill,
Sat full-blown Bufo, puffed by every quill;
Fed with soft dedication all day long,
Horace and he went hand in hand in song."
—*Ibid.*, lines 231-234.

[5] "Could pensioned Boileau lash, in honest strain,
Flatterers and bigots, even in Louis' reign?"
—*Imitations of Horace*, satire i., lines 111-112.

[6] "Above a patron, though I condescend
Sometimes to call a minister my friend."
—*Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*, lines 265-266.

[7] Pope's original poems brought him little money, but his translation of the *Iliad* made him independent. "After making all allowance for payments to his literary assistants, Pope obtained for his translation between £5,000 and £6,000, a sum which, even in these days, would not be thought inconsiderable by the most popular of authors as remuneration for a single work, and which was then wholly unprecedented. Dryden received for his translation of Virgil at the most £1,300, and Tonson's agreement with him was not at the time thought illiberal" (Courthope, *Life of Pope*, p. 156). The last volumes of the translation were published in May, 1720, when Pope was just thirty-two years old.

From the time of Pope to the present day the readers have been constantly becoming more and more numerous, and the writers, consequently, more and more independent. It is assuredly a great evil that men, fitted by their talents and acquirements to enlighten and charm the world, should be reduced to the necessity of flattering wicked and foolish patrons in return for the sustenance of life. But, though we heartily rejoice that this evil is removed, we cannot but see with concern that another evil has succeeded to it. The public is now the patron, and a most liberal patron. All that the rich and powerful bestowed on authors from the time of Mæcenas to that of Harley would not, we apprehend, make up a sum equal to that which has been paid by English booksellers to authors during the last fifty years.[4] Men of letters have accordingly ceased to court individuals, and have begun to court the public. They formerly used flattery. They now use puffing.

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[1] Johnson, "Life of Pope."

[2] Thomas Otway, 1652-1685, the author of the once famous tragedies, "The Orphan" and "Venice Preserved." He was improvident and suffered much, but the story of his death to which Macaulay refers has been doubted on the ground that it has no contemporary authority.

[3] The name of the *Fables* was given to that collection of versions and adaptations from older poets which Dryden published in 1700 and which contains much of his best work.

[4] The sums received by distinguished writers from the publishers became much more considerable in the early part of the nineteenth century. Johnson had been paid only £410 for his *Lives of the Poets* (published in 1779 and 1781), but Scott

Whether the old or the new vice be the worse, whether those who formerly lavished insincere praise on others, or those who now contrive by every art of beggary and bribery to stun the public with praises of themselves, disgrace their vocation the more deeply, we shall not attempt to decide. But of this we are sure, that it is high time to make a stand against the new trickery. The puffing of books is now so shamefully and so successfully carried on that it is the duty of all who are anxious for the purity of the national taste, or for the honour of the literary character, to join in discountenancing the practice. All the pens that ever were employed in magnifying Bish's lucky office, Romanis's fleecy hosiery, Packwood's razor strops, and Rowland's Kalydor, all the placard-bearers of Dr. Eady, all the wall-chalkers of Day and Martin, seem to have taken service with the poets and novelists of this generation. Devices which in the lowest trades are considered as disreputable are adopted without scruple, and improved upon with a despicable ingenuity, by people engaged in a pursuit which never was and never will be considered as a mere trade by any man of honour and virtue. A butcher of the higher class disdains to ticket his meat. A mercer of the higher class would be ashamed to hang up papers in his window inviting the passers-by to look at the stock of a bankrupt, all of the first quality, and going for half the value. We expect some reserve, some decent pride, in our hatter and our boot-maker. But no artifice by which notoriety can be obtained is thought too abject for a man of letters.

It is amusing to think over the history of most of the publications which have had a run during the last few years. The publisher is often the publisher of some periodical work. In this periodical work the first flourish of trumpets is sounded. The peal is then echoed and re-echoed by all the other periodical works over which the publisher, or the author, or the author's coterie, may have any influence. The newspapers are for a fortnight filled with puffs of all the various kinds which Sheridan enumerated, direct, oblique, and collusive.[1] Sometimes the praise

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received £18,000 for his *Life of Napoleon* (published in 1827). Scott received as much as £4,500 for one novel, and Moore £3,000 for *Lalla Rookh.* Murray gave Byron £2,000 for the third canto of *Childe Harold.*

[1] "Yes, sir, puffing is of various sorts; the principal are the puff direct, the puff preliminary, the puff collateral, the puff collusive and the puff oblique, or puff by implication" (Sheridan, "The Critic," act i., scene 2).

is laid on thick for simple-minded people. "Pathetic," "sublime," "splendid," "graceful," "brilliant wit," "exquisite humour," and other phrases equally flattering, fall in a shower as thick and as sweet as the sugar-plums at a Roman carnival. Sometimes greater art is used. A sinecure has been offered to the writer if he would suppress his work, or if he would even soften down a few of his incomparable portraits. A distinguished military and political character has challenged the inimitable satirist of the vices of the great; and the puffer is glad to learn that the parties have been bound over to keep the peace. Sometimes it is thought expedient that the puffer should put on a grave face, and utter his panegyric in the form of admonition. "Such attacks on private character cannot be too much condemned. Even the exuberant wit of our author, and the irresistible power of his withering sarcasm, are no excuses for that utter disregard which he manifests for the feelings of others. We cannot but wonder that a writer of such transcendent talents, a writer who is evidently no stranger to the kindly charities and sensibilities of our nature, should show so little tenderness to the foibles of noble and distinguished individuals, with whom it is clear, from every page of his work, that he must have been constantly mingling in society." These are but tame and feeble imitations of the paragraphs with which the daily papers are filled whenever an attorney's clerk or an apothecary's assistant undertakes to tell the public in bad English and worse French, how people tie their neckcloths and eat their dinners in Grosvenor Square. The editors of the higher and more respectable newspapers usually prefix the words "Advertisement," or "From a Correspondent," to such paragraphs. But this makes little difference. The panegyric is extracted, and the significant heading omitted. The fulsome eulogy makes its appearance on the covers of all the Reviews and Magazines, with "Times" or "Globe" affixed, though the editors of the Times and the Globe have no more to do with it than with Mr. Goss's way of making old rakes young again.

That people who live by personal slander should practise these arts is not surprising. Those who stoop to write calumnious books may well stoop to puff them; and that the basest of all trades should be carried on in the basest of all manners is quite proper and as it should be. But how any man who has the least self-respect, the least regard for his own personal dignity, can condescend to persecute the public with this Rag-fair importunity, we do not understand. Extreme poverty may, indeed, in some degree, be an excuse for employing these shifts, as it may be an excuse for stealing a leg of mutton. But we really think that a man of spirit and delicacy would quite as soon satisfy his wants in the one way as in the other.

It is no excuse for an author that the praises of journalists are procured by the money or influence of his publishers, and not by his own. It is his business to take such precautions as may prevent others from doing what must degrade him. It is for his honour as a gentleman, and, if he is really a man of talents, it will eventually be for his honour and interest as a writer, that his works should come before the public recommended by their own merits alone, and should be discussed with perfect freedom. If his objects be really such as he may own without shame, he will find that they will, in the long run, be better attained by suffering the voice of criticism to be fairly heard. At present, we too often see a writer attempting to obtain literary fame as Shakspeare's usurper obtains sovereignty. The publisher plays Buckingham to the author's Richard.[1] Some few creatures of the conspiracy are dexterously disposed here and there in the crowd. It is the business of these hirelings to throw up their caps, and clap their hands, and utter their *vivas*. The rabble at first stare and wonder, and at last join in shouting for shouting's sake; and thus a crown is placed on a head which has no right to it, by the huzzas of a few servile dependents.

The opinion of the great body of the reading public is very materially influenced even by the unsupported assertions of those who assume a right to criticize. Nor is the public altogether to blame on this account. Most even of those who have really a great enjoyment in reading are in the same state, with respect to a book, in which a man who has never given particular attention to the art of painting is with respect to a picture. Every man who has the least sensibility or imagination derives a certain pleasure from pictures. Yet a man of the highest and finest intellect might, unless he had formed his taste by contemplating the best pictures, be easily persuaded by a knot of connoisseurs that the worst daub in Somerset House[2] was a miracle of art. If he deserves to be laughed at, it is not for his ignorance of pictures, but for his ignorance of men. He knows that there is a delicacy of taste in painting which he does not possess, that he cannot distinguish hands, as practised judges distinguish them, that he is not familiar with the finest models, that he has never looked at them with close attention, and that, when the general effect of a piece has pleased him or displeased him, he has never troubled himself to ascertain why. When, therefore, people, whom he thinks more competent to judge than himself, and of whose sincerity he entertains no doubt, assure him that a particular work is exquisitely beautiful, he takes it for granted that they must be in the right. He returns to the examination, resolved to find or imagine beauties; and, if he can work himself up into something like admiration, he exults in his own proficiency.

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[1] "Richard III.," act iii., scene 7.

[2] The exhibitions of the Royal Academy were held in Somerset House down to the year 1838.

Just such is the manner in which nine readers out of ten judge of a book. They are ashamed to dislike what men who speak as having authority declare to be good. At present, however contemptible a poem or a novel may be, there is not the least difficulty in procuring favourable notices of it from all sorts of publications, daily, weekly, and monthly. In the mean time, little or nothing is said on the other side. The author and the publisher are interested in crying up the book. Nobody has any very strong interest in crying it down. Those who are best fitted to guide the public opinion think it beneath them to expose mere nonsense, and comfort themselves by reflecting that such popularity cannot last. This contemptuous lenity has been carried too far. It is perfectly true that reputations which have been forced into an unnatural bloom fade almost as soon as they have expanded; nor have we any apprehensions that puffing will ever raise any scribbler to the rank of a classic. It is indeed amusing to turn over some late volumes of periodical works, and to see how many immortal productions have, within a few months, been gathered to the Poems of Blackmore[1] and the novels of Mrs. Behn;[2] how many "profound views of human nature," and "exquisite delineations of fashionable manners," and "vernal, and sunny, and refreshing thoughts," and "high imaginings," and "young breathings," and "embodyings," and "pinings," and "minglings with the beauty of the universe," and "harmonies which dissolve the soul in a passionate sense of loveliness and divinity," the world has contrived to forget. The names of the books and of the writers are buried in as deep an oblivion as the name of the builder of Stonehenge. Some of the well puffed fashionable novels of eighteen hundred and twenty-nine hold the pastry of eighteen hundred and thirty; and others, which are now extolled in language almost too high-flown for the merits of Don Quixote, will, we have no doubt, line the trunks of eighteen hundred and thirty-one. But, though we have no apprehensions that puffing will ever confer permanent reputation on the undeserving, we still think its influence most pernicious. Men of real merit will, if they persevere, at last reach the station to which they are entitled, and intruders will be ejected with contempt and derision. But it is no small evil that the avenues to fame should be blocked up by a swarm of noisy, pushing, elbowing pretenders, who, though they will not ultimately be able to make good their own entrance, hinder, in the mean time, those who have a right to enter. All who will not disgrace themselves by joining in the unseemly scuffle must expect to be at first hustled and shouldered back. Some men of talents, accordingly, turn away in dejection from pursuits in which success appears to bear no proportion to desert. Others employ in self-defence the means by which competitors, far inferior to themselves, appear for a time to obtain a decided advantage. There are few who have sufficient confidence in their own powers and sufficient elevation of mind to wait with secure and contemptuous patience, while dunce after dunce presses before them. Those who will not stoop to the baseness of the modern fashion are too often discouraged. Those who do stoop to it are always degraded.

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[1] Sir Richard Blackmore, d. 1729, a physician tormented with a mania for writing poetry. His chief works were *Prince Arthur*, an epic published in 1695; *Eliza*, another epic published in 1705; and *Alfred*, yet another, in 1725; besides *Creation*, a philosophical poem which appeared in 1712. He was a favourite butt of the Queen Anne wits, especially Pope and Swift.

[2] Afra Behn, 1640-1689, was "the first female writer who had lived by her pen in England." She wrote plays and novels of no very great merit, but lively and indelicate, and therefore acceptable to her own generation.

We have of late observed with great pleasure some symptoms which lead us to hope that respectable literary men of all parties are beginning to be impatient of this insufferable nuisance. And we purpose to do what in us lies for the abating of it. We do not think that we can more usefully assist in this good work than by showing our honest countrymen what that sort of poetry is which puffing can drive through eleven editions, and how easily any bellman might, if a bellman would stoop to the necessary degree of meanness, become a "master-spirit of the age." We have no enmity to Mr. Robert Montgomery. We know nothing whatever about him, except what we have learned from his books, and from the portrait prefixed to one of them, in which he appears to be doing his very best to look like a man of genius and sensibility, though with less success than his strenuous exertions deserve. We select him, because his works have received more enthusiastic praise, and have deserved more unmixed contempt, than any which, as far as our knowledge extends, have appeared within the last three or four years. His writing bears the same relation to poetry which a Turkey carpet bears to a picture. There are colours in the Turkey carpet out of which a picture might be made. There are words in Mr. Montgomery's writing which, when disposed in certain orders and combinations, have made, and will again make, good poetry. But, as they now stand, they seem to be put together on principle in such a manner as to give no image of any thing "in the heavens above, or in the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth".

The poem on the Omnipresence of the Deity commences with a description of the creation, in which we can find only one thought which has the least pretension to ingenuity, and that one thought is stolen from Dryden, and marred in the stealing:

"Last, softly beautiful, as music's close,
Angelic woman into being rose."[1]

The all-pervading influence of the Supreme Being is then described in a few tolerable lines borrowed from Pope, and a great many intolerable lines of Mr. Robert Montgomery's own. The following may stand as a specimen:

"But who could trace Thine unrestricted course,
Though Fancy follow'd with immortal force?
There's not a blossom fondled by the breeze,
There's not a fruit that beautifies the trees,
There's not a particle in sea or air,
But nature owns thy plastic influence there!
With fearful gaze, still be it mine to see
How all is fill'd and vivified by Thee;
Upon thy mirror, earth's majestic view,
To paint Thy Presence, and to feel it too."

The last two lines contain an excellent specimen of Mr. Robert Montgomery's Turkey carpet style of writing. The majestic view of earth is the mirror of God's presence; and on this mirror Mr. Robert Montgomery paints God's presence. The use of a mirror, we submit, is not to be painted upon.

A few more lines, as bad as those which we have quoted, bring us to one of the most amusing instances of literary pilfering which we remember. It might be of use to plagiarists to know, as a general rule, that what they steal is, to employ a phrase common in advertisements, of no use to any but the right owner. We never fell in, however, with any plunderer who so little understood how to turn his booty to good account as Mr. Montgomery. Lord Byron, in a passage which every body knows by heart, has said, addressing the sea,

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[1] "From harmony, from heavenly harmony,
This universal frame began.
From harmony to harmony
Through all the compass of the notes it ran
The diapason closing full in man."
—DRYDEN, *A Song for St. Cecilia's Day.*

> "Time writes no wrinkle on thine azure brow."[1]

Mr. Robert Montgomery very coolly appropriates the image and reproduces the stolen goods in the following form:

> "And thou, vast Ocean, on whose awful face
> Time's iron feet can print no ruin-trace."

So may such ill-got gains ever prosper!

The effect which the Ocean produces on Atheists is then described in the following lofty lines:

> "Oh! never did the dark-soul'd ATHEIST stand,
> And watch the breakers boiling on the strand,
> And, while Creation stagger'd at his nod,
> Mock the dread presence of the mighty God!
> We hear Him in the wind-heaved ocean's roar,
> Hurling her billowy crags upon the shore;
> We hear Him in the riot of the blast,
> And shake, while rush the raving whirlwinds past!"

If Mr. Robert Montgomery's genius were not far too free and aspiring to be shackled by the rules of syntax, we should suppose that it is at the nod of the Atheist that creation staggers. But Mr. Robert Montgomery's readers must take such grammar as they can get, and be thankful.

A few more lines bring us to another instance of unprofitable theft. Sir Walter Scott has these lines in the Lord of the Isles:

> "The dew that on the violet lies,
> Mocks the dark lustre of thine eyes."[2]

This is pretty taken separately, and, as is always the case with the good things of good writers, much prettier in its place than can even be conceived by those who see it only detached from the context. Now for Mr. Montgomery:

> "And the bright dew-bead on the bramble lies,
> Like liquid rapture upon beauty's eyes."

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[1] *Childe Harold*, canto 4.

[2] *Lord of the Isles*, canto I.

The comparison of a violet, bright with the dew, to a woman's eyes, is as perfect as a comparison can be. Sir Walter's lines are part of a song addressed to a woman at daybreak, when the violets are bathed in dew; and the comparison is therefore peculiarly natural and graceful. Dew on a bramble is no more like a woman's eyes than dew any where else. There is a very pretty Eastern tale of which the fate of plagiarists often reminds us. The slave of a magician saw his master wave his wand, and heard him give orders to the spirits who arose at the summons. The slave stole the wand, and waved it himself in the air; but he had not observed that his master used the left hand for that purpose. The spirits thus irregularly summoned tore the thief to pieces instead of obeying his orders. There are very few who can safely venture to conjure with the rod of Sir Walter; and Mr. Robert Montgomery is not one of them.

Mr. Campbell, in one of his most pleasing pieces,[1] has this line,

"The sentinel stars set their watch in the sky."

The thought is good, and has a very striking propriety where Mr. Campbell has placed it, in the mouth of a soldier telling his dream. But, though Shakspeare assures us that "every true man's apparel fits your thief," it is by no means the case, as we have already seen, that every true poet's similitude fits your plagiarist. Let us see how Mr. Robert Montgomery uses the image:

"Ye quenchless stars! so eloquently bright,
Untroubled sentries of the shadowy night,
While half the world is lapp'd in downy dreams,
And round the lattice creep your midnight beams,
How sweet to gaze upon your placid eyes,
In lambent beauty looking from the skies."

Certainly the ideas of eloquence, of untroubled repose, of placid eyes, on the lambent beauty of which it is sweet to gaze, harmonize admirably with the idea of a sentry.

We would not be understood, however, to say, that Mr. Robert Montgomery cannot make similitudes for himself. A very few lines further on, we find one which has every mark of originality, and on which, we will be bound, none of the poets whom he has plundered will ever think of making reprisals:

"The soul, aspiring, pants its source to mount,
As streams meander level with their fount."

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[1] *The Soldier's Dream.*

We take this to be, on the whole, the worst similitude in the world. In the first place, no stream meanders, or can possibly meander, level with its fount. In the next place, if streams did meander level with their founts, no two motions can be less like each other than that of meandering level and that of mounting upwards.

We have then an apostrophe to the Deity, couched in terms which, in any writer who dealt in meanings, we should call profane, but to which we suppose Mr. Robert Montgomery attaches no idea whatever.

> "Yes! pause and think, within one fleeting hour,
> How vast a universe obeys Thy power;
> Unseen, but felt, Thine interfused control
> Works in each atom, and pervades the whole;
> Expands the blossom, and erects the tree,
> Conducts each vapour, and commands each sea,
> Beams in each ray, bids whirlwinds be unfurl'd,
> Unrols the thunder, and upheaves a world!"

No field-preacher surely ever carried his irreverent familiarity so far as to bid the Supreme Being stop and think on the importance of the interests which are under his care. The grotesque indecency of such an address throws into shade the subordinate absurdities of the passage, the unfurling of whirlwinds, the unrolling of thunder, and the upheaving of worlds.

Then comes a curious specimen of our poet's English:—

> "Yet not alone created realms engage
> Thy faultless wisdom, grand, primeval sage!
> For all the thronging woes to life allied
> Thy mercy tempers, and Thy cares provide."

We should be glad to know what the word "For" means here. If it is a preposition, it makes nonsense of the words "Thy mercy tempers." If it is an adverb, it makes nonsense of the words, "Thy cares provide."

These beauties we have taken, almost at random, from the first part of the poem. The second part is a series of descriptions of various events, a battle, a murder, an execution, a marriage, a funeral, and so forth. Mr. Robert Montgomery terminates each of these descriptions by assuring us that the Deity was present at the battle, murder, execution, marriage, or funeral in question. And this proposition, which might be safely predicated of every event that ever happened or ever will happen, forms the only link which connects these descriptions with the subject or with each other.

How the descriptions are executed, our readers are probably by this time able to conjecture. The battle is made up of the battles of all ages and nations: "red-mouthed cannons, uproaring to the clouds," and "hands grasping firm the glittering shield." The only military operations of which this part of the poem reminds us, are those which reduced the Abbey of Quedlinburgh to submission, the Templar with his cross, the Austrian and Prussian grenadiers in full uniform, and Curtius and Dentatus with their battering-ram.[1] We ought not to pass unnoticed the slain war-horse, who will no more

"Roll his red eye, and rally for the fight;"

or the slain warrior who, while "lying on his bleeding breast," contrives to "stare ghastly and grimly on the skies." As to this last exploit, we can only say, as Dante did on a similar occasion,

"Forse per forza gia di' parlasia
Si stravolse cosi alcun del tutto:
Ma io nol vidi, nè credo che sia."[2]

The tempest is thus described:

"But lo! around the marsh'lling clouds unite,
Like thick battalions halting for the fight;
The sun sinks back, the tempest spirits sweep
Fierce through the air and flutter on the deep.
Till from their caverns rush the maniac blasts,
Tear the loose sails, and split the creaking masts,
And the lash'd billows, rolling in a train,
Rear their white heads, and race along the main!"

What, we should like to know, is the difference between the two operations which Mr. Robert Montgomery so accurately distinguishes from each other, the fierce sweeping of the tempest-spirits through the air, and the rushing of the maniac blasts from their caverns? And why does the former operation end exactly when the latter commences?

We cannot stop over each of Mr. Robert Montgomery's descriptions. We have a shipwrecked sailor, who "visions a viewless temple in the air;" a murderer who stands on a heath, "with ashy lips, in cold convulsion spread;" a pious man, to whom, as he lies in bed at night,

"The panorama of past life appears,
Warms his pure mind, and melts it into tears;"

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[1] The concluding scene of "The Rovers" by Frere and Canning in the *Anti-Jacobin.*

[2] "Perchance by force of palsy some one may thus have been distorted; but I have not seen him nor do I believe that there is such" (*Inferno*, canto 20, lines 16-18).

a traveller, who loses his way, owing to the thickness of the "cloud-battalion," and the want of "heaven-lamps, to beam their holy light." We have a description of a convicted felon, stolen from that incomparable passage in Crabbe's Borough,[1] which has made many a rough and cynical reader cry like a child. We can, however, conscientiously declare that persons of the most excitable sensibility may safely venture upon Mr. Robert Montgomery's version. Then we have the "poor, mindless, pale-faced maniac boy," who

"Rolls his vacant eye,
To greet the glowing fancies of the sky."

What are the glowing fancies of the sky? And what is the meaning of the two lines which almost immediately follow?

"A soulless thing, a spirit of the woods,
He loves to commune with the fields and floods."

How can a soulless thing be a spirit? Then comes a panegyric on the Sunday. A baptism follows; after that a marriage: and we then proceed, in due course, to the visitation of the sick, and the burial of the dead.

Often as Death has been personified, Mr. Montgomery has found something new to say about him.

"O Death! thou dreadless vanquisher of earth,
The Elements shrank blasted at thy birth!
Careering round the world like tempest wind,
Martyrs before, and victims strew'd behind;
Ages on ages cannot grapple thee,
Dragging the world into eternity!"

If there be any one line in this passage about which we are more in the dark than about the rest, it is the fourth. What the difference may be between the victims and the martyrs, and why the martyrs are to lie before Death, and the victims behind him, are to us great mysteries.

We now come to the third part, of which we may say with honest Cassio, "Why, this is a more excellent song than the other."[2] Mr. Robert Montgomery is very severe on the infidels, and undertakes to prove, that, as he elegantly expresses it,

"One great Enchanter helm'd the harmonious whole."

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[1] George Crabbe, 1754-1832, the first great poet of homely life in English literature, "though nature's sternest painter yet the best," published in 1810 *The Borough*, a series of letters in verse describing the various aspects of life in a country town. The passage justly praised by Macaulay closes the twenty-third letter.

[2] "Othello," act iii., scene 2. It should be "more exquisite."

What an enchanter has to do with helming, or what a helm has to do with harmony, he does not explain. He proceeds with his argument thus:

> "And dare men dream that dismal Chance has framed
> All that the eye perceives, or tongue has named;
> The spacious world, and all its wonders, born
> Designless, self-created, and forlorn;
> Like to the flashing bubbles on a stream,
> Fire from the cloud, or phantom in a dream?"

We should be sorry to stake our faith in a higher Power on Mr. Robert Montgomery's logic. He informs us that lightning is designless and self-created. If he can believe this, we cannot conceive why he may not believe that the whole universe is designless and self-created. A few lines before, he tells us that it is the Deity who bids "thunder rattle from the skiey deep." His theory is therefore this, that God made the thunder, but that the lightning made itself.

But Mr. Robert Montgomery's metaphysics are not at present our game. He proceeds to set forth the fearful effects of Atheism.

> "Then, blood-stain'd Murder, bare thy hideous arm,
> And thou, Rebellion, welter in thy storm:
> Awake, ye spirits of avenging crime;
> Burst from your bonds, and battle with the time!"

Mr. Robert Montgomery is fond of personification, and belongs, we need not say, to that school of poets who hold that nothing more is necessary to a personification in poetry than to begin a word with a capital letter. Murder may, without impropriety, bare her arm, as she did long ago, in Mr. Campbell's Pleasures of Hope.[1] But what possible motive Rebellion can have for weltering in her storm, what avenging crime may be, who its spirits may be, why they should burst from their bonds, what their bonds may be, why they should battle with the time, what the time may be, and what a battle between the time and the spirits of avenging crime would resemble, we must confess ourselves quite unable to understand.

> "And here let Memory turn her tearful glance
> On the dark horrors of tumultuous France,
> When blood and blasphemy defiled her land,
> And fierce Rebellion shook her savage hand."

Whether rebellion shakes her own hand, shakes the hand of Memory, or shakes the hand of France, or what any one of these three metaphors would mean, we know no more than we know what is the sense of the following passage:

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[1] *Pleasures of Hope*, pt. i.

> "Let the foul orgies of infuriate crime
> Picture the raging havoc of that time,
> When leagued Rebellion march'd to kindle man,
> Fright in her rear, and Murder in her van.
> And thou, sweet flower of Austria, slaughter'd Queen,
> Who dropp'd no tear upon the dreadful scene,
> When gush'd the life-blood from thine angel form,
> And martyr'd beauty perish'd in the storm,
> Once worshipp'd paragon of all who saw,
> Thy look obedience, and thy smile a law."

What is the distinction between the foul orgies and the raging havoc which the foul orgies are to picture? Why does Fright go behind Rebellion, and Murder before? Why should not Murder fall behind Fright? Or why should not all the three walk abreast? We have read of a hero who had

> "Amazement in his van, with flight combined,
> And Sorrow's faded form, and Solitude behind."[1]

Gray, we suspect, could have given a reason for disposing the allegorical attendants of Edward thus. But to proceed, "Flower of Austria" is stolen from Byron.[2] "Dropp'd" is false English. "Perish'd in the storm" means nothing at all; and "thy look obedience" means the very reverse of what Mr. Robert Montgomery intends to say.

Our poet then proceeds to demonstrate the immortality of the soul:

> "And shall the soul, the fount of reason, die,
> When dust and darkness round its temple lie?
> Did God breathe in it no ethereal fire,
> Dimless and quenchless, though the breath expire?"

The soul is a fountain; and therefore it is not to die, though dust and darkness lie round its temple, because an ethereal fire has been breathed into it, which cannot be quenched though its breath expire. Is it the fountain, or the temple, that breathes, and has fire breathed into it?

Mr. Montgomery apostrophizes the

> "Immortal beacons,—spirits of the just,"—

and describes their employments in another world, which are to be, it seems, bathing in light, hearing fiery streams flow, and riding on living cars of lightning. The deathbed of the sceptic is described with what we suppose is meant for energy. We then have the deathbed of a Christian made as ridiculous as false imagery and false English can make it. But this is not enough. The Day of Judgment is to be described, and a roaring cataract of nonsense is poured forth upon this tremendous subject. Earth, we are told, is dashed into Eternity. Furnace blazes wheel round the horizon, and burst into bright wizard phantoms. Racing hurricanes unroll and whirl quivering fire-clouds. The white waves gallop. Shadowy worlds career around. The red and raging eye of Imagination is then forbidden to pry further. But further Mr. Robert Montgomery persists in prying. The stars bound through the airy roar. The unbosomed deep yawns on the ruin. The billows of Eternity then begin to advance. The world glares in fiery slumber. A car comes forward driven by living thunder,

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[1] Gray, *The Bard.* These lines allude to Edward III. in his conquest of France.

[2] "And she, proud Austria's mournful flower
Thy still imperial bride."
—BYRON, *Ode to Napoleon.*

> "Creation shudders with sublime dismay,
> And in a blazing tempest whirls away."

And this is fine poetry! This is what ranks its writer with the master spirits of the age! This is what has been described, over and over again, in terms which would require some qualification if used respecting Paradise Lost! It is too much that this patchwork, made by stitching together old odds and ends of what, when new, was but tawdry frippery, is to be picked off the dunghill on which it ought to rot, and to be held up to admiration as an inestimable specimen of art. And what must we think of a system by means of which verses like those which we have quoted, verses fit only for the poet's corner of the Morning Post, can produce emolument and fame? The circulation of this writer's poetry has been greater than that of Southey's Roderick, and beyond all comparison greater than that of Cary's Dante or of the best works of Coleridge. Thus encouraged Mr. Robert Montgomery has favoured the public with volume after volume. We have given so much space to the examination of his first and most popular performance that we have none to spare for his Universal Prayer, and his smaller poems, which, as the puffing journals tell us, would alone constitute a sufficient title to literary immortality. We shall pass at once to his last publication, entitled Satan.

This poem was ushered into the world with the usual roar of acclamation. But the thing was now past a joke. Pretensions so unfounded, so impudent, and so successful, had aroused a spirit of resistance. In several magazines and reviews, accordingly, Satan has been handled somewhat roughly, and the arts of the puffers have been exposed with good sense and spirit. We shall, therefore, be very concise.

Of the two poems we rather prefer that on the Omnipresence of the Deity, for the same reason which induced Sir Thomas More to rank one bad book above another. "Marry, this is somewhat. This is rhyme. But the other is neither rhyme nor reason."[1] Satan is a long soliloquy, which the Devil pronounces in five or six thousand lines of bad blank verse, concerning geography, politics, newspapers, fashionable society, theatrical amusements, Sir Walter Scott's novels, Lord Byron's poetry, and Mr. Martin's pictures. The new designs for Milton have, as was natural, particularly attracted the attention of a personage who occupies so conspicuous a place in them. Mr. Martin must be pleased to learn that, whatever may be thought of those performances on earth, they give full satisfaction in Pandæmonium, and that he is there thought to have hit off the likenesses of the various Thrones and Dominations very happily.

The motto to the poem of Satan is taken from the Book of Job: "Whence comest thou? From going to and fro in the earth, and walking up and down in it." And certainly Mr. Robert Montgomery has not failed to make his hero go to and fro, and walk up and down. With the exception, however, of this propensity to locomotion, Satan has not one Satanic quality. Mad Tom had told us that "the prince of darkness is a gentleman;"[2] but we had yet to learn that he is a respectable and pious gentleman, whose principal fault is that he is something of a twaddle and far too liberal of his good advice. That happy change in his character which Origen[3] anticipated, and of which Tillotson[4] did not despair, seems to be rapidly taking place. Bad habits are not eradicated in a moment. It is not strange, therefore, that so old an offender should now and then relapse for a short time into wrong dispositions. But to give him his due, as the proverb recommends, we must say that he always returns, after two or three lines of impiety, to his preaching style. We would seriously advise Mr. Montgomery to omit or alter about a hundred lines in different parts of this large volume, and to republish it under the name of "Gabriel." The reflections of which it consists would come less absurdly, as far as there is a more and a less in extreme absurdity, from a good than from a bad angel.

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[1] "A certain friend of Sir Thomas More's, taking great pains about a book which he intended to publish . . . brought it to Sir Thomas More to peruse it and pass his judgment upon it, which he did; and finding nothing therein worthy the press, he said to him with a grave countenance: *that, if it were in verse, it would be more worthy.* Upon which words he went immediately and turned it into verse, and then brought it to Sir Thomas again; who, looking thereon, said soberly: *Yes marry, now it is somewhat, for now it is rhyme; whereas before it was neither rhyme nor reason*" (Bacon, *Apophthegms*).

[2] "King Lear," act iii., scene 4.

[3] Origen, 185 (?)-254 (?), was perhaps the greatest theologian of the early Christian Church. He believed in the final restoration of all the lost, even of the devil.

[4] John Tillotson, 1630-1694, who belonged to the most liberal school of English theologians in the seventeenth century and whom William III. made Archbishop of Canterbury in 1691.

We can afford room only for a single quotation. We give one taken at random, neither worse nor better, as far as we can perceive, than any other equal number of lines in the book. The Devil goes to the play, and moralises thereon as follows:—

"Music and Pomp their mingling spirit shed
Around me: beauties in their cloud-like robes
Shine forth,—a scenic paradise, it glares
Intoxication through the reeling sense
Of flush'd enjoyment. In the motley host
Three prime gradations may be rank'd: the first,
To mount upon the wings of Shakspeare's mind,
And win a flash of his Promethean thought,—
To smile and weep, to shudder, and achieve
A round of passionate omnipotence,
Attend: the second, are a sensual tribe,
Convened to hear romantic harlots sing,
On forms to banquet a lascivious gaze,
While the bright perfidy of wanton eyes
Through brain and spirit darts delicious fire;
The last, a throng most pitiful! who seem,
With their corroded figures, rayless glance,
And death-like struggle of decaying age,
Like painted skeletons in charnel pomp
Set forth to satirize the human kind!—
How fine a prospect for demoniac view!
'Creatures whose souls outbalance worlds awake!'
Methinks I hear a pitying angel cry."

Here we conclude. If our remarks give pain to Mr. Robert Montgomery, we are sorry for it. But, at whatever cost of pain to individuals, literature must be purified from this taint. And, to show that we are not actuated by any feeling of personal enmity towards him, we hereby give notice that, as soon as any book shall, by means of puffing, reach a second edition, our intention is to do unto the writer of it as we have done unto Mr. Robert Montgomery.

JOHN BUNYAN

December, 1830

NOTE ON THE ESSAY

THE story of Bunyan's life has been so often told, the *Pilgrim's Progress* has so often been the theme of critics that nothing more need here be said about the author and his work. Macaulay has extolled "the prose epic of English Puritanism" not unreasonably, but with his usual emphasis. A classic it certainly is; but a classic which addresses itself most forcibly to readers of a special temperament. Those who are to enjoy it to the utmost ought to be of English race and of Puritan lineage if not of Puritan opinions. Even such persons, perhaps, can scarcely enjoy it so profoundly as those who like Macaulay were allowed and encouraged to read it as children in a period when works of imagination addressed to children were few, and the pleasures of imagination were stinted by the scruples of austere elders. To a child the vivid allegory ceased to be an allegory at all, and became as Macaulay observes a tale of the adventures of real persons. One who had read Macaulay's essay before reading the *Pilgrim's Progress* might at first feel disappointed; but the case is so rare as not to deserve considering.

JOHN BUNYAN

The Pilgrim's Progress, with a Life of John Bunyan. BY ROBERT SOUTHEY, Esq. LL.D. Poet Laureate. Illustrated with Engravings. 8vo. London: 1830.

THIS is an eminently beautiful and splendid edition of a book which well deserves all that the printer and the engraver can do for it. The Life of Bunyan is, of course, not a performance which can add much to the literary reputation of such a writer as Mr. Southey. But it is written in excellent English, and, for the most part, in an excellent spirit. Mr. Southey propounds, we need not say, many opinions from which we altogether dissent; and his attempts to excuse the odious persecution to which Bunyan was subjected have sometimes moved our indignation. But we will avoid this topic. We are at present much more inclined to join in paying homage to the genius of a great man than to engage in a controversy concerning church-government and toleration.

We must not pass without notice the engravings with which this volume is decorated. Some of Mr. Heath's wood-cuts are admirably designed and executed. Mr. Martin's[1] illustrations do not please us quite so well. His Valley of the Shadow of Death is not that Valley of the Shadow of Death which Bunyan imagined. At all events, it is not that dark and horrible glen which has from childhood been in our mind's eye. The valley is a cavern: the quagmire is a lake: the straight path runs zigzag: and Christian appears like a speck in the darkness of the immense vault. We miss, too, those hideous forms which make so striking a part of the description of Bunyan, and which Salvator Rosa[2] would have loved to draw. It is with unfeigned diffidence that we pronounce judgment on any question relating to the art of painting. But it appears to us that Mr. Martin has not of late been fortunate in his choice of subjects. He should never have attempted to illustrate the Paradise Lost. There can be no two manners more directly opposed to each other than the manner of his painting and the manner of Milton's poetry. Those things which are mere accessories in the descriptions become the principal objects in the pictures; and those figures which are most prominent in the descriptions can be detected in the pictures only by a very close scrutiny. Mr. Martin has succeeded perfectly in representing the pillars and candelabras of Pandæmonium. But he has forgotten that Milton's Pandæmonium is merely the background to Satan. In the picture, the Archangel is scarcely visible amidst the endless colonnades of his infernal palace. Milton's Paradise, again, is merely the background to his Adam and Eve. But in Mr. Martin's picture the landscape is every thing. Adam, Eve, and Raphael attract much less notice than the lake and the mountains, the gigantic flowers, and the giraffes which feed upon them. We read that James the Second sat to Varelst, the great flower-painter.[1] When the performance was finished, his Majesty appeared in the midst of a bower of sun-flowers and tulips, which completely drew away all attention from the central figure. All who looked at the portrait took it for a flower-piece. Mr. Martin, we think, introduces his immeasurable spaces, his innumerable multitudes, his gorgeous prodigies of architecture and landscape, almost as unseasonably as Varelst introduced his flower-pots and nosegays. If Mr. Martin were to paint Lear in the storm, we suspect that the blazing sky, the sheets of rain, the swollen torrents, and the tossing forest, would draw away all attention from the agonies of the insulted king and father. If he were to paint the death of Lear, the old man, asking the bystanders to undo his button, would be thrown into the shade by a vast blaze of pavilions, standards, armour, and heralds' coats.

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[1] John Martin, 1789-1854, was at one time highly esteemed as a painter of landscapes and historical pieces. He liked large canvases and vast subjects, such as the "Fall of Nineveh" and the "Destruction of Herculaneum." Charles Lamb cited him as an instance of the want of imagination in contemporary art.

[2] See p. 116.

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[1] It was not James II. but the Duke of Buckingham. Varelst, Walpole writes in his *Anecdotes of Painting*, "a real ornament of Charles's reign, and one of the few who have arrived at capital excellence in that branch of the art, was a Dutch flower-painter. It is not certain in what year he arrived in England; his works were extremely admired and his prices the greatest that had been known in this country. The Duke of Buckingham patronised him; but having too much wit to be only beneficent, and perceiving the poor man to be immoderately vain, he piqued him to attempt portraits. Varelst, thinking nothing impossible to his pencil, fell into the snare and drew the duke himself; but crowded it so much with fruits and flowers that the King (Charles II.), to whom it was shown, took it for a flower-piece" (Walpole, *Works*, iii., 302-303).

Mr. Martin would illustrate the Orlando Furioso well, the Orlando Innamorato[1] still better, the Arabian Nights best of all. Fairy palaces and gardens, porticoes of agate, and groves flowering with emeralds and rubies, inhabited by people for whom nobody cares, these are his proper domain. He would succeed admirably in the enchanted ground of Alcina, or the mansion of Aladdin. But he should avoid Milton and Bunyan.

The characteristic peculiarity of the Pilgrim's Progress is that it is the only work of its kind which possesses a strong human interest. Other allegories only amuse the fancy. The allegory of Bunyan has been read by many thousands with tears. There are some good allegories in Johnson's works, and some of still higher merit by Addison. In these performances there is, perhaps, as much wit and ingenuity as in the Pilgrim's Progress. But the pleasure which is produced by the Vision of Mirza,[2] the Vision of Theodore,[3] the genealogy of Wit,[4] or the contest between Rest and Labour,[5] is exactly similar to the pleasure which we derive from one of Cowley's odes or from a canto of Hudibras.[6] It is a pleasure which belongs wholly to the understanding, and in which the feelings have no part whatever. Nay, even Spenser himself, though assuredly one of the greatest poets that ever lived, could not succeed in the attempt to make allegory interesting. It was in vain that he lavished the riches of his mind on the House of Pride[7] and the House of Temperance.[8] One unpardonable fault, the fault of tediousness, pervades the whole of the Fairy Queen. We become sick of cardinal virtues and deadly sins, and long for the society of plain men and women. Of the persons who read the first canto, not one in ten reaches the end of the first book, and not one in a hundred perseveres to the end of the poem. Very few and very weary are those who are in at the death of the Blatant Beast.[1] If the last six books, which are said to have been destroyed in Ireland,[2] had been preserved, we doubt whether any heart less stout than that of a commentator would have held out to the end.

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[1] Matteo Maria Boiardo, Count of Scandiano, 1434(?)-1494, left behind him, unfinished, the *Orlando Innamorato*, the first great example of the romantic epic peculiar to Italy. Its influence upon Ariosto has caused Hallam to observe that "the real complement of the *Innamorato* is the *Furioso*" (*Literature of Europe*, pt. i., ch. iii.).

[2] *Spectator*, No. 159.

[3] "The Vision of Theodore, the Hermit of Teneriffe," will be found among Johnson's *Miscellaneous Essays*.

[4] *Rambler*, No. 22.

[5] *Ibid.*, No. 33.

[6] Samuel Butler, 1612-1680, wrote his mock-heroic poem of *Hudibras* in order to make the Puritans ridiculous. It abounds in terse and witty couplets, such as :—

"Doubtless the pleasure is as great
Of being cheated as to cheat ;
As lookers-on feel most delight,
That least perceive a juggler's slight,
And still the less they understand,
The more th' admire his sleight of hand."

[7] *Faerie Queene*, bk. i., canto 4.

[8] *Ibid.* bk. ii., canto 9.

It is not so with the Pilgrim's Progress. That wonderful book, while it obtains admiration from the most fastidious critics, is loved by those who are too simple to admire it. Doctor Johnson, all whose studies were desultory, and who hated, as he said, to read books through, made an exception in favour of the Pilgrim's Progress. That work was one of the two or three works which he wished longer.[3] It was by no common merit that the illiterate sectary extracted praise like this from the most pedantic of critics and the most bigoted of Tories. In the wildest parts of Scotland the Pilgrim's Progress is the delight of the peasantry. In every nursery the Pilgrim's Progress is a greater favourite than Jack the Giant-killer. Every reader knows the straight and narrow path as well as he knows a road in which he has gone backward and forward a hundred times. This is the highest miracle of genius, that things which are not should be as though they were, that the imaginations of one mind should become the personal recollections of another. And this miracle the tinker has wrought. There is no ascent, no declivity, no resting-place, no turn-stile, with which we are not perfectly acquainted. The wicket gate, and the desolate swamp which separates it from the City of Destruction, the long line of road, as straight as a rule can make it, the Interpreter's house and all its fair shows, the prisoner in the iron cage, the palace, at the doors of which armed men kept guard, and on the battlements of which walked persons clothed all in gold, the cross and the sepulchre, the steep hill and the pleasant arbour, the stately front of the House Beautiful by the wayside, the chained lions crouching in the porch, the low green valley of Humiliation, rich with grass and covered with flocks, all are as well known to us as the sights of our own street. Then we come to the narrow place where Apollyon strode right across the whole breadth of the way, to stop the journey of Christian, and where afterwards the pillar was set up to testify how bravely the pilgrim had fought the good fight. As we advance, the valley becomes deeper and deeper. The shade of the precipices on both sides falls blacker and blacker. The clouds gather overhead. Doleful voices, the clanking of chains, and the rushing of many feet to and fro, are heard through the darkness. The way, hardly discernible in gloom, runs close by the mouth of the burning pit, which sends forth its flames, its noisome smoke, and its hideous shapes to terrify the adventurer. Thence he goes on, amidst the snares and pitfalls, with the mangled bodies of those who have perished lying in the ditch by his side. At the end of the long dark valley he passes the dens in which the old giants dwelt, amidst the bones of those whom they had slain.

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[1] The Blatant Beast makes its appearance in book vi. of the *Faerie Queene* (the last completed book), containing the legend of Sir Calidore, or Courtesy. It is pursued and taken, but not killed by Calidore.

> "Then was this Monster by the maystring might
> Of doughty Calidore suppressed and tamed,
> That never more he mote endammadge wight
> With his vile tongue, which many had defamed,
> And many causelesse caused to be blamed.
> So did he eeke long after this remaine,
> Until that (whether wicked fate so framed,
> Or fault of men) he broke his yrone chaine,
> And got into the world at liberty againe."
>
> —Bk. vi., canto 12.

[2] When Spenser, who had obtained a grant of land in Cork, was forced to fly, and had his house sacked by the insurgents in 1598.

[3] According to Mrs. Piozzi, Johnson asked: "Was there yet anything written by mere man that was wished longer by its readers, excepting *Don Quixote*, *Robinson Crusoe*, and the *Pilgrim's Progress?*" (*Anecdotes*, p. 231).

Then the road passes straight on through a waste moor, till at length the towers of a distant city appear before the traveller; and soon he is in the midst of the innumerable multitudes of Vanity Fair. There are the jugglers and the apes, the shops and the puppet-shows. There are Italian Row, and French Row, and Spanish Row, and British Row, with their crowds of buyers, sellers, and loungers, jabbering all the languages of the earth.

Thence we go on by the little hill of the silver mine, and through the meadow of lilies, along the bank of that pleasant river which is bordered on both sides by fruit-trees. On the left branches off the path leading to the horrible castle, the court-yard of which is paved with the skulls of pilgrims; and right onward are the sheep-folds and orchards of the Delectable Mountains.

From the Delectable Mountains, the way lies through the fogs and briars of the Enchanted Ground, with here and there a bed of soft cushions spread under a green arbour. And beyond is the land of Beulah, where the flowers, the grapes, and the songs of birds never cease, and where the sun shines night and day. Thence are plainly seen the golden pavements and streets of pearl, on the other side of that black and cold river over which there is no bridge.

All the stages of the journey, all the forms which cross or overtake the pilgrims, giants, and hobgoblins, ill-favoured ones, and shining ones, the tall, comely, swarthy Madam Bubble, with her great purse by her side, and her fingers playing with the money, the black man in the bright vesture, Mr. Worldly Wiseman and my Lord Hategood, Mr. Talkative, and Mrs. Timorous, all are actually existing beings to us. We follow the travellers through their allegorical progress with interest not inferior to that with which we follow Elizabeth from Siberia to Moscow,[1] or Jeanie Deans from Edinburgh to London. Bunyan is almost the only writer who ever gave to the abstract the interest of the concrete. In the works of many celebrated authors, men are mere personifications. We have not a jealous man, but jealousy; not a traitor, but perfidy; not a patriot, but patriotism. The mind of Bunyan, on the contrary, was so imaginative that personifications, when he dealt with them, became men. A dialogue between two qualities, in his dream, has more dramatic effect than a dialogue between two human beings in most plays. In this respect the genius of Bunyan bore a great resemblance to that of a man who had very little else in common with him, Percy Bysshe Shelley.[2] The strong imagination of Shelley made him an idolater in his own despite. Out of the most indefinite terms of a hard, cold, dark, metaphysical system, he made a gorgeous Pantheon, full of beautiful, majestic, and life-like forms. He turned atheism itself into a mythology, rich with visions as glorious as the gods that live in the marble of Phidias, or the virgin saints that smile on us from the canvass of Murillo. The Spirit of Beauty, the Principle of Good, the Principle of Evil, when he treated of them, ceased to be abstractions. They took shape and colour. They were no longer mere words; but "intelligible forms;" "fair humanities;" objects of love, of adoration, or of fear.[1] As there can be no stronger sign of a mind destitute of the poetical faculty than that tendency which was so common among the writers of the French school to turn images into abstractions, Venus, for example, into Love, Minerva into Wisdom, Mars into War, and Bacchus into Festivity, so there can be no stronger sign of a mind truly poetical than a disposition to reverse this abstracting process, and to make individuals out of generalities. Some of the metaphysical and ethical theories of Shelley were certainly most absurd and pernicious. But we doubt whether any modern poet has possessed in an equal degree some of the highest qualities of the great ancient masters. The words bard and inspiration, which seem so cold and affected when applied to other modern writers, have a perfect propriety when applied to him. He was not an author, but a bard. His poetry seems not to have been an art, but an inspiration. Had he lived to the full age of man, he might not improbably have given to the world some great work of the very highest rank in design and execution. But, alas!

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[1] *Elizabeth, or The Exiles of Siberia*, by Madame Cottin (Sophie Ristaud), tells how the daughter of a Polish exile travelled on foot from Siberia to Moscow that she might implore his freedom from the Czar.

[2] These remarks about Shelley give some colour to Matthew Arnold's sarcasm upon Macaulay's style as having "the perpetual semblance of hitting the right nail on the head without the reality." For so great a poet, Shelley was singularly unable to create persons; even more so than Byron. His spirits always remain abstractions and never awaken genuine sympathy. Shelley is pre-eminently the poet of his own emotions, and it is only when he presents himself with or without disguise that he moves our hearts. So far from being able to give an allegory the vividness of a drama, Shelley (if we make an exception for *The Cenci*) has only written dramas as intangible as allegories. If he resembles Bunyan at all it is in his ecstatic temper.

ὁ Δάφνις ἔβα ῥόον· ἔκλυσε δίνα
τὸν Μώσαις φίλον ἄνδρα, τὸν οὐ Νύμφαισιν ἀπεχθῆ. [2]

But we must return to Bunyan. The Pilgrim's Progress undoubtedly is not a perfect allegory. The types are often inconsistent with each other; and sometimes the allegorical disguise is altogether thrown off. The river, for example, is emblematic of death; and we are told that every human being must pass through the river. But Faithful does not pass through it. He is martyred, not in shadow, but in reality, at Vanity Fair. Hopeful talks to Christian about Esau's birthright and about his own convictions of sin as Bunyan might have talked with one of his own congregation. The damsels at the House Beautiful catechize Christiana's boys, as any good ladies might catechize any boys at a Sunday School. But we do not believe that any man, whatever might be his genius, and whatever his good luck, could long continue a figurative history without falling into many inconsistencies. We are sure that inconsistencies, scarcely less gross than the worst into which Bunyan has fallen, may be found in the shortest and most elaborate allegories of the Spectator and the Rambler. The Tale of a Tub and the History of John Bull[1] swarm with similar errors, if the name of error can be properly applied to that which is unavoidable. It is not easy to make a simile go on all fours. But we believe that no human ingenuity could produce such a centipede as a long allegory in which the correspondence between the outward sign and the thing signified should be exactly preserved. Certainly no writer, ancient or modern, has yet achieved the adventure. The best thing, on the whole, that an allegorist can do, is to present to his readers a succession of analogies, each of which may separately be striking and happy, without looking very nicely to see whether they harmonize with each other. This Bunyan has done; and, though a minute scrutiny may detect inconsistencies in every page of his tale, the general effect which the tale produces on all persons, learned and unlearned, proves that he has done well. The passages which it is most difficult to defend are those in which he altogether drops the allegory, and puts into the mouth of his pilgrims religious ejaculations and disquisitions better suited to his own pulpit at Bedford or Reading than to the Enchanted Ground or to the Interpreter's Garden. Yet even these passages, though we will not undertake to defend them against the objections of critics, we feel that we could ill spare. We feel that the story owes much of its charm to these occasional glimpses of solemn and affecting subjects, which will not be hidden, which force themselves through the veil, and appear before us in their native aspect. The effect is not unlike that which is said to have been produced on the ancient stage, when the eyes of the actor were seen flaming through his mask, and giving life and expression to what would else have been an inanimate and uninteresting disguise.

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[1] "The intelligible forms of ancient poets,
The fair humanities of old religion,
The power, the beauty and the majesty."
—COLERIDGE, translation of Schiller's "Wallenstein," pt. i., act. ii., scene 3.

[2] "Daphnis has gone down the stream; the eddying water whelmed the man dear to the Muses and not unprized by the Nymphs" (Theocritus, Idyll i., lines 140, 141).

It is very amusing and very instructive to compare the Pilgrim's Progress with the Grace Abounding.[2] The latter work is indeed one of the most remarkable pieces of autobiography in the world. It is a full and open confession of the fancies which passed through the mind of an illiterate man, whose affections were warm, whose nerves were irritable, whose imagination was ungovernable, and who was under the influence of the strongest religious excitement. In whatever age Bunyan had lived, the history of his feelings would, in all probability, have been very curious. But the time in which his lot was cast was the time of a great stirring of the human mind. A tremendous burst of public feeling, produced by the tyranny of the hierarchy, menaced the old ecclesiastical institutions with destruction. To the gloomy regularity of one intolerant Church had succeeded the licence of innumerable sects, drunk with the sweet and heady must of their new liberty. Fanaticism, engendered by persecution and destined to engender persecution in turn, spread rapidly through society. Even the strongest and most commanding minds were not proof against this strange taint. Any time might have produced George Fox and James Naylor.[1] But to one time alone belong the frantic delusions of such a statesman as Vane,[2] and the hysterical tears of such a soldier as Cromwell.[3]

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[1] *The History of John Bull* was an allegory of the Partition Treaties and of the War of the Spanish Succession written by Dr. Arbuthnot, the friend of Swift and Pope, in order to discredit the policy of Queen Anne's Whig Ministry.

[2] Bunyan published his *Grace Abounding* to the Chief of Sinners in 1666, twelve years before the first part of the *Pilgrim's Progress*.

The history of Bunyan is the history of a most excitable mind in an age of excitement. By most of his biographers he has been treated with gross injustice. They have understood in a popular sense all those strong terms of self-condemnation which he employed in a theological sense. They have, therefore, represented him as an abandoned wretch, reclaimed by means almost miraculous, or, to use their favourite metaphor, "as a brand plucked from the burning." Mr. Ivimey[4] calls him the depraved Bunyan and the wicked tinker of Elstow. Surely Mr. Ivimey ought to have been too familiar with the bitter accusations which the most pious people are in the habit of bringing against themselves, to understand literally all the strong expressions which are to be found in the Grace Abounding. It is quite clear, as Mr. Southey most justly remarks, that Bunyan never was a vicious man. He married very early; and he solemnly declares that he was strictly faithful to his wife. He does not appear to have been a drunkard. He owns, indeed, that, when a boy, he never spoke without an oath. But a single admonition cured him of this bad habit for life; and the cure must have been wrought early; for at eighteen he was in the army of the Parliament;[1] and if he had carried the vice of profaneness into that service, he would doubtless have received something more than an admonition from Serjeant Bind-their-kings-in-chains, or Captain Hew-Agag-in-pieces-before-the-Lord. Bell-ringing, and playing at hockey on Sundays seem to have been the worst vices of this depraved tinker. They would have passed for virtues with Archbishop Laud. It is quite clear that, from a very early age, Bunyan was a man of a strict life, and of a tender conscience. "He had been," says Mr. Southey, "a blackguard." Even this we think too hard a censure. Bunyan was not, we admit, so fine a gentleman as Lord Digby;[2] but he was a blackguard no otherwise than as every labouring man that ever lived has been a blackguard. Indeed Mr. Southey acknowledges this. "Such he might have been expected to be by his birth, breeding, and vocation. Scarcely indeed, by possibility, could he have been otherwise." A man whose manners and sentiments are decidedly below those of his class deserves to be called a blackguard. But it is surely unfair to apply so strong a word of reproach to one who is only what the great mass of every community must inevitably be.

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[1] James Naylor, 1617(?)-1660, one of the early Quakers. His mind was somewhat unsettled. For making a grotesque entry into Bristol, which was construed as a parody of Christ's entry into Jerusalem, he was punished with inhuman severity by Parliament in 1656.

[2] See p. 51.

[3] Sir Philip Warwick was told by a physician who had attended Cromwell for many years previous to the Civil War that he was at one time subject to unaccountable melancholy and hypochondriac fancies (*Memoirs of the Reign of King Charles I.*, p. 249).

[4] Joseph Ivimey, 1773-1834, was a Baptist minister and an author. He edited an old life of Bunyan and wrote another himself, besides editing the *Pilgrim's Progress.*

Those horrible internal conflicts which Bunyan has described with so much power of language prove, not that he was a worse man than his neighbours, but that his mind was constantly occupied by religious considerations, that his fervour exceeded his knowledge, and that his imagination exercised despotic power over his body and mind. He heard voices from heaven. He saw strange visions of distant hills, pleasant and sunny as his own Delectable Mountains. From those abodes he was shut out, and placed in a dark and horrible wilderness, where he wandered through ice and snow, striving to make his way into the happy region of light. At one time he was seized with an inclination to work miracles. At another time he thought himself actually possessed by the devil. He could distinguish the blasphemous whispers. He felt his infernal enemy pulling at his clothes behind him. He spurned with his feet and struck with his hands at the destroyer. Sometimes he was tempted to sell his part in the salvation of mankind. Sometimes a violent impulse urged him to start up from his food, to fall on his knees, and to break forth into prayer. At length he fancied that he had committed the unpardonable sin. His agony convulsed his robust frame. He was, he says, as if his breastbone would split; and this he took for a sign that he was destined to burst asunder like Judas. The agitation of his nerves made all his movements tremulous; and this trembling, he supposed, was a visible mark of his reprobation, like that which had been set on Cain. At one time, indeed, an encouraging voice seemed to rush in at the window, like the noise of wind, but very pleasant, and commanded, as he says, a great calm in his soul. At another time, a word of comfort "was spoke loud unto him; it showed a great word; it seemed to be writ in great letters." But these intervals of ease were short. His state, during two years and a half, was generally the most horrible that the human mind can imagine. "I walked," says he, with his own peculiar eloquence, "to a neighbouring town; and sat down upon a settle in the street, and fell into a very deep pause about the most fearful state my sin had brought me to; and, after long musing, I lifted up my head; but methought I saw as if the sun that shineth in the heavens did grudge to give me light; and as if the very stones in the street, and tiles upon the houses, did band themselves against me. Methought that they all combined together to banish me out of the world. I was abhorred of them, and unfit to dwell among them, because I had sinned against the Saviour. Oh, how happy now was every creature over I! for they stood fast, and kept their station. But I was gone and lost." Scarcely any madhouse could produce an instance of delusion so strong, or of misery so acute.

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[1] "He joined the Parliamentary army, not as a volunteer, but as one of the young men whom Bedfordshire, like other counties under the Parliament's control, was ordered to impress for military service. His name appears in the muster roll of a regiment forming part of the garrison of Newport Pagnell in November, 1644, when he was just sixteen years old, and he served there till the end of May, 1645, and perhaps a few months longer" (C. H. Firth, Introduction to the *Pilgrim's Progress*, p. vi.).

[2] See p. 146.

It was through this Valley of the Shadow of Death, overhung by darkness, peopled with devils, resounding with blasphemy and lamentation, and passing amidst quagmires, snares, and pitfalls, close by the very mouth of hell, that Bunyan journeyed to that bright and fruitful land of Beulah, in which he sojourned during the latter period of his pilgrimage. The only trace which his cruel sufferings and temptations seem to have left behind them was an affectionate compassion for those who were still in the state in which he had once been. Religion has scarcely ever worn a form so calm and soothing as in his allegory. The feeling which predominates through the whole book is a feeling of tenderness for weak, timid, and harassed minds. The character of Mr. Fearing, of Mr. Feeble-Mind, of Mr. Despondency and his daughter Miss Muchafraid, the account of poor Littlefaith who was robbed by the three thieves, of his spending money, the description of Christian's terror in the dungeons of Giant Despair and in his passage through the river, all clearly show how strong a sympathy Bunyan felt, after his own mind had become clear and cheerful, for persons afflicted with religious melancholy.

Mr. Southey, who has no love for the Calvinists, admits that, if Calvinism had never worn a blacker appearance than in Bunyan's works, it would never have become a term of reproach. In fact, those works of Bunyan with which we are acquainted are by no means more Calvinistic than the articles and homilies of the Church of England. The moderation of his opinions on the subject of predestination gave offence to some zealous persons. We have seen an absurd allegory, the heroine of which is named Hephzibah, written by some raving supralapsarian preacher who was dissatisfied with the mild theology of the Pilgrim's Progress. In this foolish book, if we recollect rightly, the Interpreter is called the Enlightener, and the House Beautiful is Castle Strength. Mr. Southey tells us that the Catholics had also their Pilgrim's Progress, without a Giant Pope, in which the Interpreter is the Director, and the House Beautiful Grace's Hall. It is surely a remarkable proof of the power of Bunyan's genius, that two religious parties, both of which regarded his opinions as heterodox, should have had recourse to him for assistance.

There are, we think, some characters and scenes in the Pilgrim's Progress, which can be fully comprehended and enjoyed only by persons familiar with the history of the times through which Bunyan lived. The character of Mr. Greatheart, the guide, is an example. His fighting is, of course, allegorical; but the allegory is not strictly preserved. He delivers a sermon on imputed righteousness to his companions; and, soon after, he gives battle to Giant Grim, who had taken upon him to back the lions. He expounds the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah to the household and guests of Gaius; and then he sallies out to attack Slaygood, who was of the nature of flesh-eaters, in his den. These are inconsistencies; but they are inconsistencies which add, we think, to the interest of the narrative. We have not the least doubt that Bunyan had in view some stout old Greatheart of Naseby and Worcester, who prayed with his men before he drilled them, who knew the spiritual state of every dragoon in his troop, and who, with the praises of God in his mouth, and a two-edged sword in his hand, had turned to flight, on many fields of battle, the swearing, drunken bravoes of Rupert and Lunsford.[1]

Every age produces such men as By-ends. But the middle of the seventeenth century was eminently prolific of such men. Mr. Southey thinks that the satire was aimed at some particular individual; and this seems by no means improbable. At all events, Bunyan must have known many of those hypocrites who followed religion only when religion walked in silver slippers, when the sun shone, and when the people applauded. Indeed he might have easily found all the kindred of By-ends among the public men of his time. He might have found among the peers my Lord Turn-about, my Lord Time-server, and my Lord Fair-speech; in the House of Commons, Mr. Smooth-man, Mr. Anything, and Mr. Facing-both-ways; nor would "the parson of the parish, Mr. Two-tongues," have been wanting. The town of Bedford probably contained more than one politician who, after contriving to raise an estate by seeking the Lord during the reign of the saints, contrived to keep what he had got by persecuting the saints during the reign of the strumpets, and more than one priest who, during repeated changes in the discipline and doctrines of the church, had remained constant to nothing but his benefice.

One of the most remarkable passages in the Pilgrim's Progress is that in which the proceedings against Faithful are described. It is impossible to doubt that Bunyan intended to satirise the mode in which state trials were conducted under Charles the Second. The license given to the witnesses for the prosecution, the shameless partiality and ferocious insolence of the judge, the precipitancy and the blind rancour of the jury, remind us of those odious mummeries which, from the Restoration to the Revolution, were merely forms preliminary to hanging, drawing, and quartering. Lord Hate-good performs the office of counsel for the prisoners as well as Scroggs himself could have performed it.

"JUDGE. Thou runagate, heretic, and traitor, hast thou heard what these honest gentlemen have witnessed against thee?

"FAITHFUL. May I speak a few words in my own defence?

"JUDGE. Sirrah, sirrah! thou deservest to live no longer, but to be slain immediately upon the place; yet, that all men may see our gentleness to thee, let us hear what thou, vile runagate, hast to say."

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[1] Thomas Lunsford, 1610(?)-1653, a riotous youth, joined the army of Charles I. in his campaign against the Scots in 1639. Charles made him Lieutenant of the Tower in 1641, but was forced by the House of Commons to dismiss him almost immediately. In the Civil War he rose to the rank of colonel and was made Governor of Monmouth. Finally, he emigrated to Virginia and died there.

No person who knows the state trials can be at a loss for parallel cases. Indeed, write what Bunyan would, the baseness and cruelty of the lawyers of those times "sinned up to it still," and even went beyond it. The imaginary trial of Faithful, before a jury composed of personified vices, was just and merciful, when compared with the real trial of Alice Lisle [1] before that tribunal where all the vices sat in the person of Jefferies.

The style of Bunyan is delightful to every reader, and invaluable as a study to every person who wishes to obtain a wide command over the English language. The vocabulary is the vocabulary of the common people. There is not an expression, if we except a few technical terms of theology, which would puzzle the rudest peasant. We have observed several pages which do not contain a single word of more than two syllables. Yet no writer has said more exactly what he meant to say. For magnificence, for pathos, for vehement exhortation, for subtle disquisition, for every purpose of the poet, the orator, and the divine, this homely dialect, the dialect of plain working men, was perfectly sufficient.[2] There is no book in our literature on which we would so readily stake the fame of the old unpolluted English language, no book which shows so well how rich that language is in its own proper wealth, and how little it has been improved by all that it has borrowed.

Cowper said, forty or fifty years ago, that he dared not name John Bunyan in his verse, for fear of moving a sneer.[3] To our refined forefathers, we suppose, Lord Roscommon's Essay on Translated Verse,[4] and the Duke of Buckinghamshire's Essay on

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[1] Alice Lisle, 1614-1685, wife of John Lisle, the regicide, gave shelter to John Hickes, a Nonconformist minister, who had fled from Sedgemoor. For this offence she was tried by Jeffreys and sentenced to be burnt, a punishment afterwards commuted into beheading.

[2] A somewhat indiscriminate eulogy; Bunyan's language has both pathos and vehemence, but is not pre-eminent either in magnificence or subtlety. "In the narrative part of the *Pilgrim's Progress*," Mr. Firth remarks, "and in much of the dialogue Bunyan uses the everyday language of the seventeenth century workman or shopkeeper, which was a much more homely and less dignified dialect than the language of the Bible."

[3] "I name thee not, lest so despised a name
Should move a sneer at thy deservèd fame,
Yet e'en in transitory life's late day,
That mingles all my brown with sober grey,
Revere the man whose *Pilgrim* marks the road
And guides the *Progress* of the soul to God."
—COWPER, *Tirocinium*, lines 141-146.

[4] Wentworth Dillon, fourth Earl of Roscommon, 1633-1685, wrote a considerable quantity of verse which gained him a place among English poets. His principal

Poetry,[1] appeared to be compositions infinitely superior to the allegory of the preaching tinker. We live in better times; and we are not afraid to say, that, though there were many clever men in England during the latter half of the seventeenth century, there were only two minds which possessed the imaginative faculty in a very eminent degree. One of those minds produced the Paradise Lost, the other the Pilgrim's Progress.

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work, *The Essay on Translated Verse*, was published in 1684. He is now better remembered by Pope's commendation of his purity:—

"Unhappy Dryden! in all Charles's days
Roscommon only boasts unspotted bays."

[1] John Sheffield, third Earl of Mulgrave, and afterwards first Duke of Buckingham and Normanby, 1648-1721, was a politician and a man of letters, whose verses do injustice to his ability. His *Essay on Poetry* was praised by Dryden, but Dryden was a personal friend and dedicated to Mulgrave his translation of the *Æneid*.

CIVIL DISABILITIES OF THE JEWS

JANUARY, 1831

NOTE ON THE ESSAY

THE success of the arguments contained in this essay has been so complete and their justice would now be so generally admitted, at least within the British Empire, that little need be said by way of preface or commentary. It is true that they are not all beyond criticism. When Macaulay asserts the identity of the two propositions: It is right that some person or persons should possess political power, and Some person or persons must have a right to political power, he commits an obvious fallacy. Arguing in this way all who think that capital punishment is in some cases just might say, "It is right that some persons should be hanged, that is to say some persons have a right to be hanged." Such a mode of speaking might approve itself to Plato who thought that a reasonable culprit would hasten to the magistrate to receive his punishment, as a reasonable invalid hastens to the physician to obtain a remedy, but it would not have commended itself to plain English people like Macaulay himself. In truth, no man has a right to political power which is essentially a trust, and the question whether any condition of men ought to have political power can only be determined by reference to the effect which the giving them power would have upon the general well-being. Jews or ten-pound householders or grown-up men living with their fathers ought to have political power if their having it will be for the good of the commonwealth, but not otherwise. Neither is it true in all cases and without any qualification that differences of religion are absolutely irrelevant to the bestowal of political power. In some cases the differences of thought and feeling between the adherents of different creeds are so many and so considerable that harmonious co-operation in the same body politic becomes almost inconceivable. Whilst Mohammedanism and Hinduism remain what they are it is scarcely conceivable that Mohammedans and Hindus could really blend in one constituent body for the choice of a parliament which should govern India. In such a case one of the contending creeds, or else the followers of some other creed, must reign if anarchy is not to ensue. Even where religious differences are far fewer and slighter than the differences which separate Mohammedans and Hindus, mutual exasperation and intolerance may render the political equality of different sects difficult and precarious. All that we can say is, that at the present time Catholic and Protestant, Jew and freethinker, can safely and beneficially be treated alike for political and constitutional purposes. Macaulay's argument was doubtless more telling because he ignored possible cases which it might not cover, and confined himself to the circumstances of his own age and country.

CIVIL DISABILITIES OF THE JEWS

Statement of the Civil Disabilities and Privations affecting Jews in England. 8vo. London: 1829.

THE distinguished member of the House of Commons[1] who, towards the close of the late Parliament, brought forward a proposition for the relief of the Jews, has given notice of his intention to renew it. The force of reason, in the last session, carried the measure through one stage in spite of the opposition of power. Reason and power are now on the same side; and we have little doubt that they will conjointly achieve a decisive victory. In order to contribute our share to the success of just principles, we propose to pass in review, as rapidly as possible, some of the arguments, or phrases claiming to be arguments, which have been employed to vindicate a system full of absurdity and injustice.

The constitution, it is said, is essentially Christian; and therefore to admit Jews to office is to destroy the constitution. Nor is the Jew injured by being excluded from political power. For no man has any right to power. A man has a right to his property; a man has a right to be protected from personal injury. These rights the law allows to the Jew; and with these rights it would be atrocious to interfere. But it is a mere matter of favour to admit any man to political power; and no man can justly complain that he is shut out from it.

We cannot but admire the ingenuity of this contrivance for shifting the burden of the proof from those to whom it properly belongs, and who would, we suspect, find it rather cumbersome. Surely no Christian can deny that every human being has a right to be allowed every gratification which produces no harm to others, and to be spared every mortification which produces no good to others. Is it not a source of mortification to a class of men that they are excluded from political power? If it be, they have, on Christian principles, a right to be freed from that mortification, unless it can be shown that their exclusion is necessary for the averting of some greater evil. The presumption is evidently in favour of toleration. It is for the persecutor to make out his case.

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[1] Robert Grant, 1779-1838, a well-known member of the Whig party, sat for the Inverness burghs in the Parliament of 1826, and made a motion for the relief of the Jews in the session of 1830. He afterwards became Judge-Advocate General, a member of the Board of Control and finally Governor of Bombay. He died in India.

The strange argument which we are considering would prove too much even for those who advance it. If no man has a right to political power, then neither Jew nor Gentile has such a right. The whole foundation of government is taken away. But if government be taken away, the property and the persons of men are insecure; and it is acknowledged that men have a right to their property and to personal security. If it be right that the property of men should be protected, and if this can only be done by means of government, then it must be right that government should exist. Now there cannot be government unless some person or persons possess political power. Therefore it is right that some person or persons should possess political power. That is to say, some person or persons must have a right to political power.

It is because men are not in the habit of considering what the end of government is, that Catholic disabilities and Jewish disabilities have been suffered to exist so long. We hear of essentially Protestant governments and essentially Christian governments, words which mean just as much as essentially Protestant cookery, or essentially Christian horsemanship. Government exists for the purpose of keeping the peace, for the purpose of compelling us to settle our disputes by arbitration instead of settling them by blows, for the purpose of compelling us to supply our wants by industry instead of supplying them by rapine. This is the only operation for which the machinery of government is peculiarly adapted, the only operation which wise governments ever propose to themselves as their chief object. If there is any class of people who are not interested, or who do not think themselves interested, in the security of property and the maintenance of order, that class ought to have no share of the powers which exist for the purpose of securing property and maintaining order. But why a man should be less fit to exercise those powers because he wears a beard, because he does not eat ham, because he goes to the synagogue on Saturdays instead of going to the church on Sundays, we cannot conceive.

The points of difference between Christianity and Judaism have very much to do with a man's fitness to be a bishop or a rabbi. But they have no more to do with his fitness to be a magistrate, a legislator, or a minister of finance, than with his fitness to be a cobbler. Nobody has ever thought of compelling cobblers to make any declaration on the true faith of a Christian. Any man would rather have his shoes mended by a heretical cobbler than by a person who had subscribed all the thirty-nine articles, but had never handled an awl. Men act thus, not because they are indifferent to religion, but because they do not see what religion has to do with the mending of their shoes. Yet religion has as much to do with the mending of shoes as with the budget and the army estimates. We have surely had several signal proofs within the last twenty years that a very good Christian may be a very bad Chancellor of the Exchequer.[1]

But it would be monstrous, say the persecutors, that Jews should legislate for a Christian community. This is a palpable misrepresentation. What is proposed is, not that the Jews should legislate for a Christian community, but that a legislature composed of Christians and Jews should legislate for a community composed of Christians and Jews. On nine hundred and ninety-nine questions out of a thousand, on all questions of police, of finance, of civil and criminal law, of foreign policy, the Jew, as a Jew, has no interest hostile to that of the Christian, or even to that of the Churchman. On questions relating to the ecclesiastical establishment, the Jew and the Churchman may differ. But they cannot differ more widely than the Catholic and the Churchman, or the Independent and the Churchman. The principle that Churchmen ought to monopolize the whole power of the state would at least have an intelligible meaning. The principle that Christians ought to monopolize it has no meaning at all. For no question connected with the ecclesiastical institutions of the country can possibly come before Parliament, with respect to which there will not be as wide a difference between Christians as there can be between any Christian and any Jew.

In fact the Jews are not now excluded from political power. They possess it; and as long as they are allowed to accumulate large fortunes, they must possess it. The distinction which is sometimes made between civil privileges and political power is a distinction without a difference. Privileges are power. Civil and political are synonymous words, the one derived from the Latin, the other from the Greek. Nor is this mere verbal quibbling. If we look for a moment at the facts of the case, we shall see that the things are inseparable, or rather identical.

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[1] The Chancellors of the Exchequer between 1810 and 1830 were Mr. Perceval, Mr. Vansittart, Mr. Robinson, Mr. Canning, Mr. Herries and Mr. Goulburn, none of whom could be termed a great financier, whilst several were very resolute Churchmen. Probably Perceval, Goulburn and Vansittart are more particularly meant.

That a Jew should be a judge in a Christian country would be most shocking. But he may be a juryman. He may try issues of fact; and no harm is done. But if he should be suffered to try issues of law, there is an end to the constitution. He may sit in a box plainly dressed, and return verdicts. But that he should sit on the bench in a black gown and white wig, and grant new trials, would be an abomination not to be thought of among baptized people. The distinction is certainly most philosophical.

What power in civilized society is so great as that of the creditor over the debtor? If we take this away from the Jew, we take away from him the security of his property. If we leave it to him, we leave to him a power more despotic by far than that of the king and all his cabinet.

It would be impious to let a Jew sit in Parliament. But a Jew may make money; and money may make members of Parliament. Gatton and Old Sarum[1] may be the property of a Hebrew. An elector of Penryn[2] will take ten pounds from Shylock rather than nine pounds nineteen shillings and eleven pence three farthings from Antonio. To this no objection is made. That a Jew should possess the substance of legislative power, that he should command eight votes on every division as if he were the great Duke of Newcastle[3] himself, is exactly as it should be. But that he should pass the bar and sit down on those mysterious cushions of green leather, that he should cry "hear" and "order," and talk about being on his legs, and being, for one, free to say this and to say that, would be a profanation sufficient to bring ruin on the country.

That a Jew should be privy-councillor to a Christian king would be an eternal disgrace to the nation. But the Jew may govern the money-market, and the money-market may govern the world. The minister may be in doubt as to his scheme of finance till he has been closeted with the Jew. A congress of sovereigns may be forced to summon the Jew to their assistance. The scrawl of the Jew on the back of a piece of paper may be worth more than the royal word of three kings, or the national faith of three new American republics. But that he should put Right Honourable before his name would be the most frightful of national calamities.

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[1] Gatton in Surrey and Old Sarum (the site of the ancient city which preceded Salisbury) in Wiltshire were pocket boroughs without inhabitants suppressed by the Reform Act of 1832.

[2] In the little borough of Penryn in Cornwall the franchise was possessed by all householders paying scot and lot, but they only numbered 140. Two landowners owned the borough and controlled the burgesses (Oldfield, *History of the Boroughs of Great Britain*). Penryn was so notoriously corrupt that a bill was introduced in 1828 for transferring its representation to Manchester, then unrepresented. It was disfranchised by the first Reform Act.

[3] Henry Pelham Francis Pelham Clinton, fourth Duke of Newcastle, 1785-1851, a high Tory, ejected some of his tenants at Newark for having voted on the Whig side in the general election of 1830. When reproached for this conduct, he asked, "Is it not lawful for me to do what I please with my own?"

It was in this way that some of our politicians reasoned about the Irish Catholics. The Catholics ought to have no political power. The sun of England is set for ever if the Catholics exercise political power. Give the Catholics every thing else; but keep political power from them. These wise men did not see that, when every thing else had been given, political power had been given. They continued to repeat their cuckoo song, when it was no longer a question whether Catholics should have political power or not, when a Catholic Association[1] bearded the Parliament, when a Catholic agitator exercised infinitely more authority than the Lord Lieutenant.

If it is our duty as Christians to exclude the Jews from political power, it must be our duty to treat them as our ancestors treated them, to murder them, and banish them, and rob them. For in that way, and in that way alone, can we really deprive them of political power. If we do not adopt this course, we may take away the shadow, but we must leave them the substance. We may do enough to pain and irritate them; but we shall not do enough to secure ourselves from danger, if danger really exists. Where wealth is, there power must inevitably be.

The English Jews, we are told, are not Englishmen. They are a separate people, living locally in this island, but living morally and politically in communion with their brethren who are scattered over all the world. An English Jew looks on a Dutch or a Portuguese Jew as his countryman, and on an English Christian as a stranger. This want of patriotic feeling, it is said, renders a Jew unfit to exercise political functions.

The argument has in it something plausible; but a close examination shows it to be quite unsound. Even if the alleged facts are admitted, still the Jews are not the only people who have preferred their sect to their country. The feeling of patriotism, when society is in a healthful state, springs up, by a natural and inevitable association, in the minds of citizens who know that they owe all their comforts and pleasures to the bond which unites them in one community. But, under a partial and oppressive government, these associations cannot acquire that strength which they have in a better state of things. Men are compelled to seek from their party that protection which they ought to receive from their country, and they, by a natural consequence, transfer to their party that affection which they would otherwise have felt for their country. The Huguenots of France called in the help of England against their Catholic kings. The Catholics of France called in the help of Spain against a Huguenot king. Would it be fair to infer, that at present the French Protestants would wish to see their religion made dominant by the help of a Prussian or English army? Surely not, and why is it that they are not willing, as they formerly were willing, to sacrifice the interests of their country to the interests of their religious persuasion? The reason is obvious: they were persecuted then, and are not persecuted now. The English Puritans, under Charles the First, prevailed on the Scotch to invade England. Do the Protestant Dissenters of our time wish to see the Church put down by an invasion of foreign Calvinists? If not, to what cause are we to attribute the change? Surely to this, that the Protestant Dissenters are far better treated now than in the seventeenth century. Some of the most illustrious public men that England ever produced were inclined to take refuge from the tyranny of Laud in North America. Was this because Presbyterians and Independents are incapable of loving their country? But it is idle to multiply instances. Nothing is so offensive to a man who knows any thing of history or of human nature as to hear those who exercise the powers of government accuse any sect of foreign attachments. If there be any proposition universally true in politics it is this, that foreign attachments are the fruit of domestic misrule. It has always been the trick of bigots to make their subjects miserable at home, and then to complain that they look for relief abroad; to divide society, and to wonder that it is not united; to govern as if a section of the state were the whole, and to censure the other sections of the state for their want of patriotic spirit. If the Jews have not felt towards England like children, it is because she has treated them like a step-mother. There is no feeling which more certainly developes itself in the minds of men living under tolerably good government than the feeling of patriotism. Since the beginning of the world, there never was any nation, or any large portion of any nation, not cruelly oppressed, which was wholly destitute of that feeling. To make it therefore ground of accusation against a class of men, that they are not patriotic, is the most vulgar legerdemain of sophistry. It is the logic which the wolf employs against the lamb. It is to accuse the mouth of the stream of poisoning the source.

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[1] The Catholic Association was formed in Ireland in 1824 to procure the abolition of Catholic disabilities. Suppressed by an act of 1825, it was immediately reconstituted in a slightly different shape and came to embrace nearly the whole Catholic population of Ireland. It virtually compelled Wellington and Peel to accept Catholic Emancipation. The Catholic agitator was of course Daniel O'Connell.

If the English Jews really felt a deadly hatred to England, if the weekly prayer of their synagogues were that all the curses denounced by Ezekiel on Tyre and Egypt might fall on London, if, in their solemn feasts, they called down blessings on those who should dash our children to pieces on the stones, still, we say, their hatred to their countrymen would not be more intense than that which sects of Christians have often borne to each other. But in fact the feeling of the Jews is not such. It is precisely what, in the situation in which they are placed, we should expect it to be. They are treated far better than the French Protestants were treated in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, or than our Puritans were treated in the time of Laud. They, therefore, have no rancour against the government or against their countrymen. It will not be denied that they are far better affected to the state than the followers of Coligni[1] or Vane. But they are not so well treated as the dissenting sects of Christians are now treated in England; and on this account, and, we firmly believe, on this account alone, they have a more exclusive spirit. Till we have carried the experiment farther, we are not entitled to conclude that they cannot be made Englishmen altogether. The statesman who treats them as aliens, and then abuses them for not entertaining all the feelings of natives, is as unreasonable as the tyrant who punished their fathers for not making bricks without straw.

Rulers must not be suffered thus to absolve themselves of their solemn responsibility. It does not lie in their mouths to say that a sect is not patriotic. It is their business to make it patriotic. History and reason clearly indicate the means. The English Jews are, as far as we can see, precisely what our government has made them. They are precisely what any sect, what any class of men, treated as they have been treated, would have been. If all the red-haired people in Europe had, during centuries, been outraged and oppressed, banished from this place, imprisoned in that, deprived of their money, deprived of their teeth, convicted of the most improbable crimes on the feeblest evidence, dragged at horses' tails, hanged, tortured, burned alive, if, when manners became milder, they had still been subject to debasing restrictions and exposed to vulgar insults, locked up in particular streets in some countries, pelted and ducked by the rabble in others, excluded every where from magistracies and honours, what would be the patriotism of gentlemen with red hair? And if, under such circumstances, a proposition were made for admitting red-haired men to office, how striking a speech might an eloquent admirer of our old institutions deliver against so revolutionary a measure! "These men," he might say, "scarcely consider themselves as Englishmen. They think a red-haired Frenchman or a red-haired German more closely connected with them than a man with brown hair born in their own parish. If a foreign sovereign patronises red hair, they love him better than their own native king. They are not Englishmen: they cannot be Englishmen: nature has forbidden it: experience proves it to be impossible. Right to political power they have none; for no man has a right to political power. Let them enjoy personal security; let their property be under the protection of the law. But if they ask for leave to exercise power over a community of which they are only half members, a community the constitution of which is essentially dark-haired, let us answer them in the words of our wise ancestors, *Nolumus leges Angliæ mutari.*"[1]

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[1] Gaspard de Coligni, 1517-1572, of noble birth and a brave soldier, was created Admiral of France in 1552. In middle life he became a Protestant and proved himself the ablest and most faithful leader of the Huguenots in the wars of religion. He was murdered at the commencement of the massacre of St. Bartholomew.

But, it is said, the Scriptures declare that the Jews are to be restored to their own country; and the whole nation looks forward to that restoration. They are, therefore, not so deeply interested as others in the prosperity of England. It is not their home, but merely the place of their sojourn, the house of their bondage. This argument, which first appeared in the Times newspaper, and which has attracted a degree of attention proportioned not so much to its own intrinsic force as to the general talent with which that journal is conducted, belongs to a class of sophisms by which the most hateful persecutions may easily be justified. To charge men with practical consequences which they themselves deny is disingenuous in controversy; it is atrocious in government. The doctrine of predestination, in the opinion of many people, tends to make those who hold it utterly immoral. And certainly it would seem that a man who believes his eternal destiny to be already irrevocably fixed is likely to indulge his passions without restraint and to neglect his religious duties. If he is an heir of wrath, his exertions must be unavailing. If he is preordained to life, they must be superfluous. But would it be wise to punish every man who holds the higher doctrines of Calvinism, as if he had actually committed all those crimes which we know some Antinomians to have committed? Assuredly not. The fact notoriously is that there are many Calvinists as moral in their conduct as any Arminian, and many Arminians as loose as any Calvinist.

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[1] The answer of the barons at the Parliament of Merton in 1236 to the proposal of the prelates that children born out of wedlock should be legitimated by the subsequent marriage of the parents.

It is altogether impossible to reason from the opinions which a man professes to his feelings and his actions; and in fact no person is ever such a fool as to reason thus, except when he wants a pretext for persecuting his neighbours. A Christian is commanded, under the strongest sanctions, to be just in all his dealings. Yet to how many of the twenty-four millions of professing Christians in these islands would any man in his senses lend a thousand pounds without security? A man who should act, for one day, on the supposition that all the people about him were influenced by the religion which they professed, would find himself ruined before night; and no man ever does act on that supposition in any of the ordinary concerns of life, in borrowing, in lending, in buying, or in selling. But when any of our fellow-creatures are to be oppressed, the case is different. Then we represent those motives which we know to be so feeble for good as omnipotent for evil. Then we lay to the charge of our victims all the vices and follies to which their doctrines, however remotely, seem to tend. We forget that the same weakness, the same laxity, the same disposition to prefer the present to the future, which make men worse than a good religion, make them better than a bad one.

It was in this way that our ancestors reasoned, and that some people in our time still reason, about the Catholics. A Papist believes himself bound to obey the pope. The pope has issued a bull deposing Queen Elizabeth. Therefore every Papist will treat her grace as an usurper. Therefore every Papist is a traitor. Therefore every Papist ought to be hanged, drawn, and quartered. To this logic we owe some of the most hateful laws that ever disgraced our history. Surely the answer lies on the surface. The Church of Rome may have commanded these men to treat the queen as an usurper. But she has commanded them to do many other things which they have never done. She enjoins her priests to observe strict purity. You are always taunting them with their licentiousness. She commands all her followers to fast often, to be charitable to the poor, to take no interest for money, to fight no duels, to see no plays. Do they obey these injunctions? If it be the fact that very few of them strictly observe her precepts, when her precepts are opposed to their passions and interests, may not loyalty, may not humanity, may not the love of ease, may not the fear of death, be sufficient to prevent them from executing those wicked orders which the Church of Rome has issued against the sovereign of England? When we know that many of these people do not care enough for their religion to go without beef on a Friday for it, why should we think that they will run the risk of being racked and hanged for it?

People are now reasoning about the Jews as our fathers reasoned about the Papists. The law which is inscribed on the walls of the synagogues prohibits covetousness. But if we were to say that a Jew mortgagee would not foreclose because God had commanded him not to covet his neighbour's house, every body would think us out of our wits. Yet it passes for an argument to say that a Jew will take no interest in the prosperity of the country in which he lives, that he will not care how bad its laws and police may be, how heavily it may be taxed, how often it may be conquered and given up to spoil, because God has promised that, by some unknown means, and at some undetermined time, perhaps ten thousand years hence, the Jews shall migrate to Palestine. Is not this the most profound ignorance of human nature? Do we not know that what is remote and indefinite affects men far less than what is near and certain? The argument too applies to Christians as strongly as to Jews. The Christian believes as well as the Jew, that at some future period the present order of things will come to an end. Nay, many Christians believe that the Messiah will shortly establish a kingdom on the earth, and reign visibly over all its inhabitants. Whether this doctrine be orthodox or not we shall not here inquire. The number of people who hold it is very much greater than the number of Jews residing in England. Many of those who hold it are distinguished by rank, wealth, and ability. It is preached from pulpits, both of the Scottish and of the English church. Noblemen and members of Parliament have written in defence of it. Now wherein does this doctrine differ, as far as its political tendency is concerned, from the doctrine of the Jews? If a Jew is unfit to legislate for us because he believes that he or his remote descendants will be removed to Palestine, can we safely open the House of Commons to a fifth-monarchy man, who expects that before this generation shall pass away, all the kingdoms of the earth will be swallowed up in one divine empire?

Does a Jew engage less eagerly than a Christian in any competition which the law leaves open to him? Is he less active and regular in his business than his neighbours? Does he furnish his house meanly, because he is a pilgrim and sojourner in the land? Does the expectation of being restored to the country of his fathers make him insensible to the fluctuations of the stock-exchange? Does he, in arranging his private affairs, ever take into the account the chance of his migrating to Palestine? If not, why are we to suppose that feelings which never influence his dealings as a merchant, or his dispositions as a testator, will acquire a boundless influence over him as soon as he becomes a magistrate or a legislator? There is another argument which we would not willingly treat with levity, and which yet we scarcely know how to treat seriously. Scripture, it is said, is full of terrible denunciations against the Jews. It is foretold that they are to be wanderers. Is it then right to give them a home? It is foretold that they are to be oppressed. Can we with propriety suffer them to be rulers? To admit them to the rights of citizens is manifestly to insult the Divine oracles.

We allow that to falsify a prophecy inspired by Divine Wisdom would be a most atrocious crime. Is it, therefore, a happy circumstance for our frail species, that it is a crime which no man can possibly commit. If we admit the Jews to seats in Parliament, we shall, by so doing, prove that the prophecies in question, whatever they may mean, do not mean that the Jews shall be excluded from Parliament.

In fact it is already clear that the prophecies do not bear the meaning put upon them by the respectable persons whom we are now answering. In France and in the United States the Jews are already admitted to all the rights of citizens. A prophecy, therefore, which should mean that the Jews would never, during the course of their wanderings, be admitted to all the rights of citizens in the places of their sojourn, would be a false prophecy. This, therefore, is not the meaning of the prophecies of Scripture.

But we protest altogether against the practice of confounding prophecy with precept, of setting up predictions which are often obscure against a morality which is always clear. If actions are to be considered as just and good merely because they have been predicted, what action was ever more laudable than that crime which our bigots are now, at the end of eighteen centuries, urging us to avenge on the Jews, that crime which made the earth shake and blotted out the sun from heaven? The same reasoning which is now employed to vindicate the disabilities imposed on our Hebrew countrymen will equally vindicate the kiss of Judas and the judgment of Pilate. "The Son of man goeth, as it is written of him; but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed." And woe to those who, in any age or in any country, disobey his benevolent commands under pretence of accomplishing his predictions. If this argument justifies the laws now existing against the Jews, it justifies equally all the cruelties which have ever been committed against them, the sweeping edicts of banishment and confiscation, the dungeon, the rack, and the slow fire. How can we excuse ourselves for leaving property to people who are to "serve their enemies in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things;" for giving protection to the persons of those who are to "fear day and night, and to have none assurance of their life;" for not seizing on the children of a race whose "sons and daughters are to be given unto another people?"

We have not so learned the doctrines of Him who commanded us to love our neighbour as ourselves, and who, when He was called upon to explain what He meant by a neighbour, selected as an example a heretic and an alien. Last year, we remember, it was represented by a pious writer in the John Bull newspaper, and by some other equally fervid Christians, as a monstrous indecency, that the measure for the relief of the Jews should be brought forward in Passion week. One of these humourists ironically recommended that it should be read a second time on Good Friday. We should have had no objection; nor do we believe that the day could be commemorated in a more worthy manner. We know of no day fitter for terminating long hostilities, and repairing cruel wrongs, than the day on which the religion of mercy was founded. We know of no day fitter for blotting out from the statute-book the last traces of intolerance than the day on which the spirit of intolerance produced the foulest of all judicial murders, the day on which the list of the victims of intolerance, that noble list wherein Socrates and More are enrolled, was glorified by a yet greater and holier name.

MOORE'S LIFE OF LORD BYRON

JUNE, 1831

NOTE ON THE ESSAY

MACAULAY has owned in a letter to his sister, Hannah, 10th June, 1831, that he never wrote anything with less heart than this essay. He did not feel himself attracted towards Byron as a man, nor has he seriously attempted to criticise Byron as a poet. After a brief and telling sketch of the poet's life he goes on to examine not his poetry, but his poetical theories. Macaulay himself has remarked that a man may be a great poet yet an indifferent critic, and the remark is peculiarly applicable to Byron, sensitive, irritable, petulant, swayed by difference of political opinion, by personal friendship or enmity, nay, even by the mere need of contradiction. That Byron praised Pope in extravagant terms, that he imperfectly relished Shakspeare and flouted Wordsworth, are curious particulars in the history of Byron's mind, but not things of moment when we seek to decide Byron's place in literature. Yet it is on these particulars that Macaulay laid the main stress of his essay, because he felt strongly and could express himself incisively on the dispute between the older school of poets and the poets who had gained the affection of the public when he was a youth at Cambridge. Even on this subject his criticism is superficial. He tells us truly, no doubt, that many of the rules considered inviolable by the disciples of Boileau and Pope were conventions, sometimes silly conventions. But he makes no attempt to discover the reasons why people came to demand "correctness" or the real excellences of the best works of the "correct" poets. The *Essay on Man* and the *Epistle to Arbuthnot* are not mere feats of ingenuity in complying with perverse conditions. What we want to ascertain is their distinctive quality, the thing which makes them classics, although not classics of the same rank with "Hamlet" or with *Paradise Lost.* But this Macaulay does not help us to discover.

When at length and unwillingly he begins to criticise Byron's poetry, he is content to make a few remarks which are sensible but somewhat obvious. That Byron had little dramatic power; that he had a marvellous talent for description; that he dwelt incessantly upon the painfulness of life; that his melancholy was partly ingrained, partly an affectation ; all this is true, but is little more than a preamble to an adequate criticism of Byron's poetry. We should like to have heard something about the development of his genius and to have had some guidance in distinguishing that which will last from that which is perishable in his poems. We should like to know why Byron's poetry called forth such a response from his contemporaries. His youth, his beauty, his misfortunes, nay, his vices, accounted for much, but it is childish to think that they accounted for all. They were of far less moment than the energy of his vehement soul and the ardour of his sympathy with that age of revolt into which he was born. Macaulay, stoutly as he championed the new poetry, was hardly initiated into its secrets. He might jeer at the poets of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but he lived more with them than with Wordsworth or Shelley. As a Whig he hardly knew what to think of Byron's radicalism. As a man singularly irreproachable, but a trifle commonplace, he did not pierce very far into the mind of the pessimist. At all events he felt his deficiencies.

The literature relating to Byron is enormous and much of it has been published since Macaulay's essay appeared. But Mr. Prothero's edition of the *Letters and Journals* is so full, exact and rich in detail as to supersede Moore's *Life* and to claim the especial thanks of all who interest themselves in Byron. Any reader of the following essay, who wishes to form his own opinion on such points in Byron's life and character as Macaulay has noticed, will find all the material collected and arranged for him by Mr. Prothero.

MOORE'S LIFE OF LORD BYRON

Letters and Journals of Lord Byron; with Notices of his Life. BY THOMAS MOORE, Esq. 2 vols. 4to. London: 1830.

WE have read this book with the greatest pleasure. Considered merely as a composition, it deserves to be classed among the best specimens of English prose which our age has produced. It contains, indeed, no single passage equal to two or three which we could select from the Life of Sheridan.[1] But, as a whole, it is immeasurably superior to that work. The style is agreeable, clear, and manly, and when it rises into eloquence, rises without effort or ostentation. Nor is the matter inferior to the manner. It would be difficult to name a book which exhibits more kindness, fairness, and modesty. It has evidently been written, not for the purpose of showing, what, however, it often shows, how well its author can write, but for the purpose of vindicating, as far as truth will permit, the memory of a celebrated man who can no longer vindicate himself. Mr. Moore never thrusts himself between Lord Byron and the public. With the strongest temptations to egotism, he has said no more about himself than the subject absolutely required.

A great part, indeed the greater part, of these volumes, consists of extracts from the Letters and Journals of Lord Byron; and it is difficult to speak too highly of the skill which has been shown in the selection and arrangement. We will not say that we have not occasionally remarked in these two large quartos an anecdote which should have been omitted, a letter which should have been suppressed, a name which should have been concealed by asterisks, or asterisks which do not answer the purpose of concealing the name. But it is impossible, on a general survey, to deny that the task has been executed with great judgment and great humanity. When we consider the life which Lord Byron had led, his petulance, his irritability, and his communicativeness, we cannot but admire the dexterity with which Mr. Moore has contrived to exhibit so much of the character and opinions of his friend, with so little pain to the feelings of the living.

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[1] Also by Moore.

The extracts from the journals and correspondence of Lord Byron are in the highest degree valuable, not merely on account of the information which they contain respecting the distinguished man by whom they were written, but on account also of their rare merit as compositions. The letters, at least those which were sent from Italy, are among the best in our language. They are less affected than those of Pope and Walpole; they have more matter in them than those of Cowper. Knowing that many of them were not written merely for the person to whom they were directed, but were general epistles, meant to be read by a large circle, we expected to find them clever and spirited, but deficient in ease. We looked with vigilance for instances of stiffness in the language and awkwardness in the transitions. We have been agreeably disappointed; and we must confess that, if the epistolary style of Lord Byron was artificial, it was a rare and admirable instance of that highest art which cannot be distinguished from nature.

Of the deep and painful interest which this book excites no abstract can give a just notion. So sad and dark a story is scarcely to be found in any work of fiction; and we are little disposed to envy the moralist who can read it without being softened.

The pretty fable by which the Duchess of Orleans[1] illustrated the character of her son the Regent might, with little change, be applied to Byron. All the fairies, save one, had been bidden to his cradle. All the gossips had been profuse of their gifts. One had bestowed nobility, another genius, a third beauty. The malignant elf who had been uninvited came last, and, unable to reverse what her sisters had done for their favourite, had mixed up a curse with every blessing. In the rank of Lord Byron, in his understanding, in his character, in his very person, there was a strange union of opposite extremes. He was born to all that men covet and admire. But in every one of those eminent advantages which he possessed over others was mingled something of misery and debasement. He was sprung from a house, ancient indeed and noble, but degraded and impoverished by a series of crimes and follies which had attained a scandalous publicity. The kinsman whom he succeeded had died poor, and, but for merciful judges, would have died upon the gallows.[1] The young peer had great intellectual powers; yet there was an unsound part in his mind. He had naturally a generous and feeling heart: but his temper was wayward and irritable. He had a head which statuaries loved to copy, and a foot the deformity of which the beggars in the streets mimicked.[2] Distinguished at once by the strength and by the weakness of his intellect, affectionate yet perverse, a poor lord, and a handsome cripple, he required, if ever man required, the firmest and the most judicious training. But, capriciously as nature had dealt with him, the parent to whom the office of forming his character was intrusted was more capricious still.[3] She passed from paroxysms of rage to paroxysms of tenderness. At one time she stifled him with her caresses: at another time she insulted his deformity. He came into the world; and the world treated him as his mother had treated him, sometimes with fondness, sometimes with cruelty, never with justice. It indulged him without discrimination, and punished him without discrimination. He was truly a spoiled child, not merely the spoiled child of his parent, but the spoiled child of nature, the spoiled child of fortune, the spoiled child of fame, the spoiled child of society. His first poems were received with a contempt which, feeble as they were, they did not absolutely deserve.[4] The poem which he published on his return from his travels was, on the other hand, extolled far above its merit.[5] At twenty-four, he found himself on the highest pinnacle of literary fame, with Scott, Wordsworth, Southey, and a crowd of other distinguished writers beneath his feet. There is scarcely an instance in history of so sudden a rise to so dizzy an eminence.

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[1] Charlotte Elizabeth, 1652-1722, daughter of Charles Louis, Elector Palatine, and second wife of Philip, Duke of Orleans, the brother of Louis XIV. A very ugly woman, of strong character and shrewd intelligence, she proved an austere critic of the French court, and had much cause for grief in the vices of her brilliant son who became Duke of Orleans in 1701 and Regent of France on the death of Louis. Saint-Simon quotes the fable in his description of the regent's character.

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[1] Compare Mr. Prothero's account of the poet's father, Captain John Byron, "a gambler, a spendthrift, a profligate scamp disowned by his father." He ran away with and subsequently married Lady Carmarthen. The poet's half-sister, Augusta, was the offspring of this marriage. The poet succeeded William, fifth Lord Byron, known as "the wicked Lord Byron," who killed Mr. Chaworth in a duel. For this he was tried before the House of Lords, but acquitted.

[2] The strangely discrepant evidence of contemporaries concerning Byron's lameness is collected by Mr. Prothero in his edition of the *Letters and Journals* (vol. i., pp. 11, 12). Macaulay alludes here to an incident described by Byron's old schoolfellow, Mr. Bailey (Moore, *Life of Lord Byron*).

[3] Captain Byron died in 1791 when his son was little more than three years old. Young Byron was therefore brought up solely by his mother, Captain Byron's second wife. Many illustrations of her violent yet affectionate temper will be found in Mr. Prothero's edition of the *Letters and Journals* (vol. i.).

[4] *Hours of Idleness* published in 1807.

[5] The first two cantos of *Childe Harold* were published in 1812. "I awoke and found myself famous."

Every thing that could stimulate, and every thing that could gratify the strongest propensities of our nature, the gaze of a hundred drawing-rooms, the acclamations of the whole nation, the applause of applauded men, the love of lovely women, all this world and all the glory of it were at once offered to a youth to whom nature had given violent passions, and whom education had never taught to control them. He lived as many men live who have no similar excuse to plead for their faults. But his countrymen and his countrywomen would love him and admire him. They were resolved to see in his excesses only the flash and outbreak of that same fiery mind which glowed in his poetry. He attacked religion;[1] yet in religious circles his name was mentioned with fondness, and in many religious publications his works were censured with singular tenderness. He lampooned the Prince Regent; yet he could not alienate the Tories.[2] Every thing, it seemed, was to be forgiven to youth, rank, and genius.

Then came the reaction. Society, capricious in its indignation as it had been capricious in its fondness, flew into a rage with its froward and petted darling. He had been worshipped with an irrational idolatry. He was persecuted with an irrational fury. Much has been written about those unhappy domestic occurrences which decided the fate of his life. Yet nothing is, nothing ever was, positively known to the public, but this, that he quarrelled with his lady, and that she refused to live with him. There have been hints in abundance, and shrugs and shakings of the head, and "Well, well, we know," and "We could an if we would," and "If we list to speak," and "There be that might an they list." But we are not aware that there is before the world substantiated by credible, or even by tangible evidence, a single fact indicating that Lord Byron was more to blame than any other man who is on bad terms with his wife. The professional men whom Lady Byron consulted were undoubtedly of opinion that she ought not to live with her husband. But it is to be remembered that they formed that opinion without hearing both sides. We do not say, we do not mean to insinuate, that Lady Byron was in any respect to blame. We think that those who condemn her on the evidence which is now before the public are as rash as those who condemn her husband. We will not pronounce any judgment, we cannot, even in our own minds, form any judgment, on a transaction which is so imperfectly known to us. It would have been well if, at the time of the separation, all those who knew as little about the matter then as we know about it now had shown that forbearance which, under such circumstances, is but common justice.[1]

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[1] At this time Byron had scarcely written anything that could be termed an attack upon religion, but Macaulay probably refers to the sceptical passages in the second canto of *Childe Harold.*

[2] Presumably in the "Lines Addressed to a Lady Weeping" (the Princess Charlotte):—

"Weep, daughter of a royal line,
A Sire's disgrace, a realm's decay,
Ah! happy! if each tear of thine
Could wash a father's fault away."

If Byron did not alienate the Tories by these lines, he at least earned much abuse.

We know no spectacle so ridiculous as the British public in one of its periodical fits of morality. In general, elopements, divorces, and family quarrels, pass with little notice. We read the scandal, talk about it for a day, and forget it. But once in six or seven years our virtue becomes outrageous. We cannot suffer the laws of religion and decency to be violated. We must make a stand against vice. We must teach libertines that the English people appreciate the importance of domestic ties. Accordingly some unfortunate man, in no respect more depraved than hundreds whose offences have been treated with lenity, is singled out as an expiatory sacrifice. If he has children, they are to be taken from him. If he has a profession, he is to be driven from it. He is cut by the higher orders, and hissed by the lower. He is, in truth, a sort of whipping-boy, by whose vicarious agonies all the other transgressors of the same class are, it is supposed, sufficiently chastised. We reflect very complacently on our own severity, and compare with great pride the high standard of morals established in England with the Parisian laxity. At length our anger is satiated. Our victim is ruined and heart-broken. And our virtue goes quietly to sleep for seven years more.

It is clear that those vices which destroy domestic happiness ought to be as much as possible repressed. It is equally clear that they cannot be repressed by penal legislation. It is therefore right and desirable that public opinion should be directed against them. But it should be directed against them uniformly, steadily, and temperately, not by sudden fits and starts. There should be one weight and one measure. Decimation is always an objectionable mode of punishment. It is the resource of judges too indolent and hasty to investigate facts and to discriminate nicely between shades of guilt. It is an irrational practice, even when adopted by military tribunals. When adopted by the tribunal of public opinion, it is infinitely more irrational. It is good that a certain portion of disgrace should constantly attend on certain bad actions. But it is not good that the offenders should merely have to stand the risks of a lottery of infamy, that ninety-nine out of every hundred should escape, and that the hundredth, perhaps the most innocent of the hundred, should pay for all. We remember to have seen a mob assembled in Lincoln's Inn to hoot a gentleman[1] against whom the most oppressive proceeding known to the English law was then in progress. He was hooted because he had been an unfaithful husband, as if some of the most popular men of the age, Lord Nelson for example, had not been unfaithful husbands. We remember a still stronger case. Will posterity believe that, in an age in which men whose gallantries were universally known, and had been legally proved, filled some of the highest offices in the state and in the army, presided at the meetings of religious and benevolent institutions, were the delight of every society, and the favourites of the multitude, a crowd of moralists went to the theatre, in order to pelt a poor actor for disturbing the conjugal felicity of an alderman? What there was in the circumstances either of the offender or of the sufferer to vindicate the zeal of the audience, we could never conceive. It has never been supposed that the situation of an actor is peculiarly favourable to the rigid virtues, or that an alderman enjoys any special immunity from injuries such as that which on this occasion roused the anger of the public. But such is the justice of mankind.

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[1] "No evidence exists," Mr. Prothero says, "to prove the precise nature of the charges on which Lady Byron separated from her husband." The history of the actual separation is to be found in vol. iii. of the *Letters and Journals*, Appendix to ch. xii.

In these cases the punishment was excessive; but the offence was known and proved. The case of Lord Byron was harder. True Jedwood justice was dealt out to him. First came the execution, then the investigation, and last of all, or rather not at all, the accusation. The public, without knowing any thing whatever about the transactions in his family, flew into a violent passion with him, and proceeded to invent stories which might justify its anger. Ten or twenty different accounts of the separation, inconsistent with each other, with themselves, and with common sense, circulated at the same time. What evidence there might be for any one of these, the virtuous people who repeated them neither knew nor cared. For in fact these stories were not the causes, but the effects of the public indignation. They resembled those loathsome slanders which Lewis Goldsmith,[1] and other abject libellers of the same class, were in the habit of publishing about Bonaparte; such as that he poisoned a girl with arsenic when he was at the military school, that he hired a grenadier to shoot Dessaix at Marengo, that he filled St. Cloud with all the pollutions of Capreæ. There was a time when anecdotes like these obtained some credence from persons who, hating the French emperor without knowing why, were eager to believe any thing which might justify their hatred. Lord Byron fared in the same way. His countrymen were in a bad humour with him. His writings and his character had lost the charm of novelty. He had been guilty of the offence which, of all offences, is punished most severely; he had been over-praised; he had excited too warm an interest; and the public, with its usual justice, chastised him for its own folly. The attachments of the multitude bear no small resemblance to those of the wanton enchantress in the Arabian Tales, who, when the forty days of her fondness were over, was not content with dismissing her lovers, but condemned them to expiate, in loathsome shapes, and under cruel penances, the crime of having once pleased her too well.

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[1] It seems impossible to discover now who was the gentleman or what the proceeding in question. The actor alluded to by Macaulay was Edmund Kean, and the alderman was Mr. Cox, a banker.

The obloquy which Byron had to endure was such as might well have shaken a more constant mind. The newspapers were filled with lampoons. The theatres shook with execrations. He was excluded from circles where he had lately been the observed of all observers. All those creeping things that riot in the decay of nobler natures hastened to their repast; and they were right; they did after their kind. It is not every day that the savage envy of aspiring dunces is gratified by the agonies of such a spirit, and the degradation of such a name.

The unhappy man left his country for ever. The howl of contumely followed him across the sea, up the Rhine, over the Alps; it gradually waxed fainter; it died away; those who had raised it began to ask each other, what, after all, was the matter about which they had been so clamorous, and wished to invite back the criminal whom they had just chased from them. His poetry became more popular than it had ever been; and his complaints were read with tears by thousands and tens of thousands who had never seen his face.

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[1] Lewis Goldsmith, 1763-1846, a journalist, editor of the *Argus*, an English paper published in Paris, and afterwards of the *Anti-Gallican Monitor and Anti-Corsican Chronicle*. He published in 1811 his *Secret History of the Cabinet of Bonaparte*, and in 1812 his *Secret History of Bonaparte's Diplomacy*.

He had fixed his home on the shores of the Adriatic, in the most picturesque and interesting of cities, beneath the brightest of skies, and by the brightest of seas. Censoriousness was not the vice of the neighbours whom he had chosen. They were a race corrupted by a bad government and a bad religion, long renowned for skill in the arts of voluptuousness, and tolerant of all the caprices of sensuality. From the public opinion of the country of his adoption, he had nothing to dread. With the public opinion of the country of his birth, he was at open war. He plunged into wild and desperate excesses, ennobled by no generous or tender sentiment. From his Venetian haram he sent forth volume after volume, full of eloquence, of wit, of pathos, of ribaldry, and of bitter disdain. His health sank under the effects of his intemperance. His hair turned grey. His food ceased to nourish him. A hectic fever withered him up. It seemed that his body and mind were about to perish together.

From this wretched degradation he was in some measure rescued by a connection,[1] culpable indeed, yet such as, if it were judged by the standard of morality established in the country where he lived, might be called virtuous. But an imagination polluted by vice, a temper embittered by misfortune, and a frame habituated to the fatal excitement of intoxication, prevented him from fully enjoying the happiness which he might have derived from the purest and most tranquil of his many attachments. Midnight draughts of ardent spirits and Rhenish wines had begun to work the ruin of his fine intellect. His verse lost much of the energy and condensation which had distinguished it. But he would not resign, without a struggle, the empire which he had exercised over the men of his generation. A new dream of ambition arose before him; to be the chief of a literary party; to be the great mover of an intellectual revolution; to guide the public mind of England from his Italian retreat, as Voltaire had guided the public mind of France from the villa of Ferney. With this hope, as it should seem, he established the Liberal.[2]

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[1] His amour with the Countess Guiccioli.

[2] It was in 1820 that Byron first thought of setting on foot a weekly newspaper. In 1822 he began the *Liberal* in concert with Shelley, and brought Leigh Hunt out

But, powerfully as he had affected the imaginations of his contemporaries, he mistook his own powers if he hoped to direct their opinions; and he still more grossly mistook his own disposition, if he thought that he could long act in concert with other men of letters. The plan failed, and failed ignominiously. Angry with himself, angry with his coadjutors, he relinquished it, and turned to another project, the last and noblest of his life.

A nation, once the first among the nations, preeminent in knowledge, preeminent in military glory, the cradle of philosophy, of eloquence, and of the fine arts, had been for ages bowed down under a cruel yoke. All the vices which oppression generates, the abject vices which it generates in those who submit to it, the ferocious vices which it generates in those who struggle against it, had deformed the character of that miserable race. The valour which had won the great battle of human civilisation, which had saved Europe, which had subjugated Asia, lingered only among pirates and robbers. The ingenuity, once so conspicuously displayed in every department of physical and moral science, had been depraved into a timid and servile cunning. On a sudden this degraded people had risen on their oppressors. Discountenanced or betrayed by the surrounding potentates, they had found in themselves something of that which might well supply the place of all foreign assistance, something of the energy of their fathers.[1]

As a man of letters, Lord Byron could not but be interested in the event of this contest. His political opinions, though, like all his opinions, unsettled, leaned strongly towards the side of liberty. He had assisted the Italian insurgents with his purse, and, if their struggle against the Austrian government had been prolonged, would probably have assisted them with his sword. But to Greece he was attached by peculiar ties. He had when young resided in that country. Much of his most splendid and popular poetry had been inspired by its scenery and by its history. Sick of inaction, degraded in his own eyes by his private vices and by his literary failures, pining for untried excitement and honourable distinction, he carried his exhausted body and his wounded spirit to the Grecian camp.

His conduct in his new situation showed so much vigour and

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from England to be editor. Shelley was drowned soon after, Byron quarrelled with Hunt, and when four numbers had appeared, he dropped the paper. In the first number the *Vision of Judgment* was given to the public.

[1] The modern Greeks have no doubt much of the ancient Greek blood, but it is mixed with Slavonic, Albanian and Wallachian elements.

good sense as to justify us in believing that, if his life had been prolonged, he might have distinguished himself as a soldier and a politician. But pleasure and sorrow had done the work of seventy years upon his delicate frame. The hand of death was upon him: he knew it; and the only wish which he uttered was that he might die sword in hand.

This was denied to him. Anxiety, exertion, exposure, and those fatal stimulants which had become indispensable to him, soon stretched him on a sick bed, in a strange land, amidst strange faces, without one human being that he loved near him. There, at thirty-six, the most celebrated Englishman of the nineteenth century closed his brilliant and miserable career.

We cannot even now retrace those events without feeling something of what was felt by the nation, when it was first known that the grave had closed over so much sorrow and so much glory; something of what was felt by those who saw the hearse, with its long train of coaches, turn slowly northward, leaving behind it that cemetery which had been consecrated by the dust of so many great poets, but of which the doors were closed against all that remained of Byron.[1] We well remember that on that day, rigid moralists could not refrain from weeping for one so young, so illustrious, so unhappy, gifted with such rare gifts, and tried by such strong temptations. It is unnecessary to make any reflections. The history carries its moral with it. Our age has indeed been fruitful of warnings to the eminent, and of consolations to the obscure. Two men have died within our recollection, who, at a time of life at which many people have hardly completed their education, had raised themselves, each in his own department, to the height of glory. One of them died at Longwood; the other at Missolonghi.

It is always difficult to separate the literary character of a man who lives in our own time from his personal character. It is peculiarly difficult to make this separation in the case of Lord Byron. For it is scarcely too much to say, that Lord Byron never wrote without some reference, direct or indirect, to himself. The interest excited by the events of his life mingles itself in our minds, and probably in the minds of almost all our readers, with the interest which properly belongs to his works. A generation must pass away before it will be possible to form a fair judgment of his books, considered merely as books. At present they are not only books, but relics. We will however venture, though with unfeigned diffidence, to offer some desultory remarks on his poetry.

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[1] Dr. Ireland, the Dean of Westminster, was sounded regarding the interment of Byron within the Abbey. But, as he did not approve, Byron was buried at Hucknall Torkard near Nottingham.

His lot was cast in the time of a great literary revolution. That poetical dynasty which had dethroned the successors of Shakspeare and Spenser was, in its turn, dethroned by a race who represented themselves as heirs of the ancient line, so long dispossessed by usurpers. The real nature of this revolution has not, we think, been comprehended by the great majority of those who concurred in it.

Wherein especially does the poetry of our times differ from that of the last century? Ninety-nine persons out of a hundred would answer that the poetry of the last century was correct, but cold and mechanical, and that the poetry of our time, though wild and irregular, presented far more vivid images, and excited the passions far more strongly than that of Parnell, of Addison, or of Pope. In the same manner we constantly hear it said, that the poets of the age of Elizabeth had far more genius, but far less correctness, than those of the age of Anne. It seems to be taken for granted, that there is some incompatibility, some antithesis between correctness and creative power. We rather suspect that this notion arises merely from an abuse of words, and that it has been the parent of many of the fallacies which perplex the science of criticism.[1]

What is meant by correctness in poetry? If by correctness be meant the conforming to rules which have their foundation in truth and in principles of human nature, then correctness is only another name for excellence. If by correctness be meant the conforming to rules purely arbitrary, correctness may be another name for dulness and absurdity.

A writer who describes visible objects falsely and violates the propriety of character, a writer who makes the mountains "nod their drowsy heads" at night, or a dying man take leave of the world with a rant like that of Maximin,[2] may be said, in the high and just sense of the phrase, to write incorrectly. He violates the first great law of his art. His imitation is altogether unlike the thing imitated. The four poets who are most eminently free from incorrectness of this description are Homer, Dante, Shakspeare, and Milton. They are, therefore, in one sense, and that the best sense, the most correct of poets.

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[1] A corrective to Macaulay's somewhat unfair and undiscriminating attack upon the "correct" school of poetry will be found in Conington's essay on the "Poetry of Pope" (*Miscellaneous Works*, vol. i.), and in Courthope's exposition of Pope's aims in the last chapter of his *Life of Pope*.

[2] In Dryden's "Tyrannic Love, or the Royal Martyr," the Emperor Maximin breaks out thus on the verge of death:—

> "What had the Gods to do with me or mine?
> Did I molest your heaven?
> Why should you then make Maximin your foe
> Who paid you tribute which he need not do?

When it is said that Virgil, though he had less genius than Homer, was a more correct writer, what sense is attached to the word correctness? Is it meant that the story of the Æneid is developed more skilfully than that of the Odyssey? that the Roman describes the face of the external world, or the emotions of the mind, more accurately than the Greek? that the characters of Achates and Mnestheus are more nicely discriminated, and more consistently supported, than those of Achilles, of Nestor, and of Ulysses? The fact incontestably is that, for every violation of the fundamental laws of poetry which can be found in Homer, it would be easy to find twenty in Virgil.

Troilus and Cressida is perhaps of all the plays of Shakspeare that which is commonly considered as the most incorrect. Yet it seems to us infinitely more correct, in the sound sense of the term, than what are called the most correct plays of the most correct dramatists. Compare it, for example, with the Iphigénie of Racine. We are sure that the Greeks of Shakspeare bear a far greater resemblance than the Greeks of Racine to the real Greeks who besieged Troy; and for this reason, that the Greeks of Shakspeare are human beings, and the Greeks of Racine mere names, mere words printed in capitals at the head of paragraphs

Your altars I with smoke of gums did crown
For which you leant your hungry nostrils down,
All daily gaping for my incense there,
More than your sun could draw you in a year.
But by the Gods (by Maximin I meant)
Henceforth, I and my world
Hostility with you and yours declare.
Look to it, Gods: for you the aggressors are.
Keep you your rain and sunshine in the skies
And I'll keep back my flame and sacrifice.
Your trade of heaven shall soon be at a stand,
And all your goods lie dead upon your hand.

. . . .

. . . —after thee I'll go
Revenging still and following even to the other world my blow:
And shoving back this earth, on which I sit,
I'll mount and scatter all the Gods I hit."

—Act v., scene I.

of declamation.[1] Racine, it is true, would have shuddered at the thought of making a warrior at the siege of Troy quote Aristotle.[2] But of what use is it to avoid a single anachronism, when the whole play is one anachronism, the sentiments and phrases of Versailles in the camp of Aulis?

In the sense in which we are now using the word correctness, we think that Sir Walter Scott, Mr. Wordsworth, Mr. Coleridge, are far more correct poets than those who are commonly extolled as the models of correctness, Pope, for example, and Addison. The single description of a moonlight night in Pope's Iliad[3] contains more inaccuracies than can be found in all the Excursion. There is not a single scene in Cato, in which all that conduces to poetical illusion, all the propriety of character, of language, of situation, is not more grossly violated than in any part of the Lay of the last Minstrel. No man can possibly think that the Romans of Addison resemble the real Romans so closely as the moss-troopers of Scott resemble the real moss-troopers. Wat Tinlin and William of Deloraine are not, it is true, persons of so much dignity as Cato. But the dignity of the persons represented has as little to do with the correctness of poetry as with the correctness of painting. We prefer a gipsy by Reynolds to his

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[1] This is unjust to Racine who was much more than a mere declaimer and whom Macaulay himself has elsewhere termed "the graceful, the tender, the melodious Racine" (*History of England*, ch. xix.).

[2] "Paris and Troilus you have both said well,
And on the cause and question now in hand
Have glozed—but superficially; not much
Unlike young men whom Aristotle thought
Unfit to hear moral philosophy."
—"Troilus and Cressida," act ii., scene 2.

[3] "As when the moon, refulgent lamp of night,
O'er heaven's clear azure spreads her sacred light,
When not a breath disturbs the deep serene
And not a cloud o'ercasts the solemn scene;
Around her throne the vivid planets roll,
And stars unnumbered gild the glowing pole,
O'er the dark trees a yellower verdure shed
And tip with silver ev'ry mountain's head;
Then shine the vales, the rocks in prospect rise,
A flood of glory bursts from all the skies;
The conscious swains, rejoicing in the sight,
Eye the blue vault and bless the useful light."
—Pope's translation of Homer's *Iliad*, bk. viii., lines 687-698.

These lines, as a translation of the Greek, are certainly free. Their accuracy as a picture was impugned by Wordsworth in a famous passage in the Essay Supplementary to the Preface to his *Poems* and defended by Byron in a letter to Leigh Hunt of the 30th October, 1815.

Majesty's head on a sign-post, and a Borderer by Scott to a Senator by Addison.

In what sense, then, is the word correctness used by those who say, with the author of the Pursuits of Literature,[1] that Pope was the most correct of English Poets, and that next to Pope came the late Mr. Gifford?[2] What is the nature and value of that correctness, the praise of which is denied to Macbeth, to Lear, and to Othello, and given to Hoole's[3] translations and to all the Seatonian prize-poems?[4] We can discover no eternal rule, no rule founded in reason and in the nature of things, which Shakspeare does not observe much more strictly than Pope. But if by correctness be meant the conforming to a narrow legislation which, while lenient to the *mala in se*, multiplies, without a shadow of a reason, the *mala prohibita*, if by correctness be meant a strict attention to certain ceremonious observances, which are no more essential to poetry than etiquette to good government, or than the washings of a Pharisee to devotion, then, assuredly, Pope may be a more correct poet than Shakspeare; and, if the code were a little altered, Colley Cibber might be a more correct poet than Pope. But it may well be doubted whether this kind of correctness be a merit, nay, whether it be not an absolute fault.

It would be amusing to make a digest of the irrational laws which bad critics have framed for the government of poets. First in celebrity and in absurdity stand the dramatic unities of place and time. No human being has ever been able to find any thing that could, even by courtesy, be called an argument for these unities, except that they have been deduced from the general practice of the Greeks.[5] It requires no very profound examination to discover that the Greek dramas, often admirable as compositions, are, as exhibitions of human character and human life, far inferior to the English plays of the age of Elizabeth. Every scholar knows that the dramatic part of the Athenian tragedies was at first subordinate to the lyrical part. It would, therefore, have been little less than a miracle if the laws of the Athenian stage had been found to suit plays in which there was no chorus. All the greatest masterpieces of the dramatic art have been composed in direct violation of the unities, and could never have been composed if the unities had not been violated. It is clear, for example, that such a character as that of Hamlet could never have been developed within the limits to which Alfieri confined himself.[1] Yet such was the reverence of literary men during the last century for these unities that Johnson who, much to his honour, took the opposite side, was, as he says, "frightened at his own temerity," and "afraid to stand against the authorities which might be produced against him." [2]

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[1] The author was T. J. Mathias, 1754-1835. The first portion of the *Pursuits of Literature* was published in 1794, and the last in 1797.

[2] William Gifford, 1756-1826, a sturdy, narrow-minded man of letters, who ridiculed the Della Cruscans in his *Bæviad* and *Mæviad*, and gained a reputation by his translation of Juvenal published in 1802. He was the first editor of the *Quarterly Review*, and is supposed to have contributed the notorious article on Keats' *Endymion*. He edited Ben Jonson, Ford and Massinger.

[3] John Hoole, 1727-1803, translated Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* and Tasso's *Jerusalem Delivered* in the commonplace heroic couplets which Macaulay ridicules in the essay on Addison.

[4] In 1741 the Rev. Thomas Seaton devised to the University of Cambridge the rents of certain real estate to found an annual prize for that Master of Arts who should write the best poem on a sacred subject.

[5] The unity of time is not strictly observed by the Greek dramatists.

There are other rules of the same kind without end. "Shakspeare," says Rymer,[3] "ought not to have made Othello black; for the hero of a tragedy ought always to be white." "Milton," says another critic, "ought not to have taken Adam for his hero; for the hero of an epic poem ought always to be victorious." [4] "Milton," says another, "ought not to have put so many similes into his first book; for the first book of an epic poem ought always to be the most unadorned. There are no similes in the first book of the Iliad." "Milton," says another, "ought not to have placed in an epic poem such lines as these :—

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[1] Victor Alfieri, 1749-1803, a Piedmontese nobleman, had his first play, "Cleopatra," produced in 1775. In the following years he wrote many tragedies, usually selecting such legendary or historical subjects as gave scope for the utterance of strong and manly passions. He partook of the revolutionary spirit and sought to open a new period in Italian literature. His personal character is fairly described by Macaulay a few pages farther on. An intrigue with Penelope, Lady Ligonier, led to a duel with her husband. Alfieri fell in love with Louisa, Princess of Stolberg, wife of the Pretender Charles Edward, who left her husband to live with him, and afterwards erected his tomb in the church of Santa Croce in Florence.

[2] "Yet when I speak thus slightly of dramatic rules, I cannot but recollect how much wit and learning may be produced against me; before such authorities I am afraid to stand, not that I think the present question one of those that are to be decided by mere authority, but because it is to be suspected that these precepts have not been so easily received but for better reasons than I have yet been able to find" (Johnson, Preface to "Shakspeare").

[3] Thomas Rymer, 1641-1713, a critic of some reputation in his day, published in 1693 *A Short View of Tragedy with some Reflections on Shakspeare and other Practitioners for the Stage*. He analysed "Othello" most unfavourably, objecting especially to the choice of a blackamoor for a hero.

[4] "Spenser has a better plea for his *Fairy Queen*, had his action been finished, or had been one; and Milton, if the Devil had not been his hero instead of Adam; if the giant had not foiled the knight, and driven him out of his stronghold to wander through the world with his lady-errant" (Dryden, Dedication of the Translation of the *Æneid*). Compare Addison's answer to this criticism of Milton, *Spectator*, No. 297.

> " 'While thus I called, and strayed I knew not whither.' "[1]

And why not? The critic is ready with a reason, a lady's reason. "Such lines," says he, "are not, it must be allowed, unpleasing to the ear; but the redundant syllable ought to be confined to the drama, and not admitted into epic poetry." As to the redundant syllable, in heroic rhyme on serious subjects, it has been, from the time of Pope downward, proscribed by the general consent of all the correct school. No magazine would have admitted so incorrect a couplet as that of Drayton;

> "As when we lived untouch'd with these disgraces,
> When as our kingdom was our dear embraces."[2]

Another law of heroic rhyme, which, fifty years ago, was considered as fundamental, was, that there should be a pause, a comma at least, at the end of every couplet. It was also provided that there should never be a full stop except at the end of a line. Well do we remember to have heard a most correct judge of poetry revile Mr. Rogers[3] for the incorrectness of that most sweet and graceful passage,

> "Such grief was ours,—it seems but yesterday,—
> When in thy prime, wishing so much to stay,
> 'Twas thine, Maria, thine without a sigh
> At midnight in a sister's arms to die.
> Oh thou wert lovely; lovely was thy frame,
> And pure thy spirit as from heaven it came:
> And when recall'd to join the blest above
> Thou diedst a victim to exceeding love,
> Nursing the young to health. In happier hours,
> When idle Fancy wove luxuriant flowers,
> Once in thy mirth thou badst me write on thee;
> And now I write what thou shalt never see."

Sir Roger Newdigate[4] is fairly entitled, we think, to be ranked among the great critics of this school. He made a law that none of the poems written for the prize which he established at Oxford should exceed fifty lines. This law seems to us to have at least as much foundation in reason as any of those which we have mentioned; nay, much more, for the world, we believe, is pretty well agreed in thinking that the shorter a prize-poem is, the better.

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[1] Milton, *Paradise Lost*, bk. viii., line 283.

[2] *England's Heroical Epistles;* "The Lady Jane Gray to the Lord Guilford Dudley." A friend has remarked to me that Drayton was well able to write "correct" heroic couplets such as the following :—

> "And Gordian knots do curiously entwine
> The names of Henry and of Geraldine."

[3] Samuel Rogers, 1763-1853, a banker, connoisseur and poet, a personal acquaintance of Macaulay and of most men of letters at that time.

[4] Sir Roger Newdigate, 1719-1806, a country gentleman of literary and artistic tastes who established this prize in 1805. The salutary restraint mentioned by Macaulay has since been removed.

We do not see why we should not make a few more rules of the same kind; why we should not enact that the number of scenes in every act shall be three or some multiple of three, that the number of lines in every scene shall be an exact square, that the *dramatis personæ* shall never be more or fewer than sixteen, and that, in heroic rhymes, every thirty-sixth line shall have twelve syllables. If we were to lay down these canons, and to call Pope, Goldsmith, and Addison incorrect writers for not having complied with our whims, we should act precisely as those critics act who find incorrectness in the magnificent imagery and the varied music of Coleridge and Shelley.

The correctness which the last century prized so much resembles the correctness of those pictures of the garden of Eden which we see in old Bibles. We have an exact square enclosed by the rivers Pison, Gihon, Hiddekel, and Euphrates, each with a convenient bridge in the centre, rectangular beds of flowers, a long canal, neatly bricked and railed in, the tree of knowledge clipped like one of the limes behind the Tuilleries, standing in the centre of the grand alley, the snake twined round it, the man on the right hand, the woman on the left, and the beasts drawn up in an exact circle round them. In one sense the picture is correct enough. That is to say, the squares are correct; the circles are correct; the man and the woman are in a most correct line with the tree; and the snake forms a most correct spiral.

But if there were a painter so gifted that he could place on the canvass that glorious paradise, seen by the interior eye of him whose outward sight had failed with long watching and labouring for liberty and truth, if there were a painter who could set before us the mazes of the sapphire brook, the lake with its fringe of myrtles, the flowery meadows, the grottoes overhung by vines, the forests shining with Hesperian fruit and with the plumage of gorgeous birds, the massy shade of that nuptial bower which showered down roses on the sleeping lovers, what should we think of a connoisseur who should tell us that this painting, though finer than the absurd picture in the old Bible, was not so correct. Surely we should answer, It is both finer and more correct; and it is finer because it is more correct. It is not made up of correctly drawn diagrams; but it is a correct painting, a worthy representation of that which it is intended to represent.

It is not in the fine arts alone that this false correctness is prized by narrow-minded men, by men who cannot distinguish means from ends, or what is accidental from what is essential. M. Jourdain admired correctness in fencing. "You had no business to hit me then. You must never thrust in quart till you have thrust in tierce."[1] M. Tomès liked correctness in medical practice. "I stand up for Artemius. That he killed his patient is plain enough. But still he acted quite according to rule. A man dead is a man dead; and there is an end of the matter. But if rules are to be broken, there is no saying what consequences may follow."[2] We have heard of an old German officer, who was a great admirer of correctness in military operations. He used to revile Bonaparte for spoiling the science of war, which had been carried to such exquisite perfection by Marshal Daun. "In my youth we used to march and countermarch all the summer without gaining or losing a square league, and then we went into winter quarters. And now comes an ignorant, hot-headed young man, who flies about from Boulogne to Ulm, and from Ulm to the middle of Moravia, and fights battles in December. The whole system of his tactics is monstrously incorrect." The world is of opinion, in spite of critics like these, that the end of fencing is to hit, that the end of medicine is to cure, that the end of war is to conquer, and that those means are the most correct which best accomplish the ends.

And has poetry no end, no eternal and immutable principles? Is poetry, like heraldry, mere matter of arbitrary regulation? The heralds tell us that certain scutcheons and bearings denote certain conditions, and that to put colours on colours, or metals on metals, is false blazonry. If all this were reversed, if every coat of arms in Europe were new fashioned, if it were decreed that or should never be placed but on argent, or argent but on or, that illegitimacy should be denoted by a lozenge, and widowhood by a bend, the new science would be just as good as the old science, because both the new and the old would be good for nothing. The mummery of Portcullis and Rouge Dragon,[3] as it has no other value than that which caprice has assigned to it, may well submit to any laws which caprice may impose on it. But it is not so with that great imitative art, to the power of which all ages, the rudest and the most enlightened, bear witness. Since its first great masterpieces were produced, every thing that is changeable in this world has been changed. Civilisation has been gained, lost, gained again. Religions, and languages, and forms of government, and usages of private life, and modes of thinking, all have undergone a succession of revolutions. Every thing has passed away but the great features of nature, and the heart of man, and the miracles of that art of which it is the office to reflect back the heart of man and the features of nature. Those two strange old poems, the wonder of ninety generations, still retain all their freshness. They still command the veneration of minds enriched by the literature of many nations and ages. They are still, even in wretched translations, the delight of schoolboys. Having survived ten thousand capricious fashions, having seen successive codes of criticism become obsolete, they still remain to us, immortal with the immortality of truth, the same when perused in the study of an English scholar, as when they were first chanted at the banquets of the Ionian princes.

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[1] Molière, "Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme," act iii., scene 3.

[2] Molière, "L'Amour Médecin," act ii., scene 3.

[3] The four pursuivants of the Royal College of Heralds are entitled Rouge Croix, Blue Mantle, Rouge Dragon and Portcullis respectively.

Poetry is, as was said more than two thousand years ago, imitation.[1] It is an art analogous in many respects to the art of painting, sculpture, and acting. The imitations of the painter, the sculptor, and the actor, are indeed, within certain limits, more perfect than those of the poet. The machinery which the poet employs consists merely of words; and words cannot, even when employed by such an artist as Homer or Dante, present to the mind images of visible objects quite so lively and exact as those which we carry away from looking on the works of the brush and the chisel. But, on the other hand, the range of poetry is infinitely wider than that of any other imitative art, or than that of all the other imitative arts together. The sculptor can imitate only form; the painter only form and colour; the actor, until the poet supplies him with words, only form, colour, and motion. Poetry holds the outer world in common with the other arts. The heart of man is the province of poetry, and of poetry alone. The painter, the sculptor, and the actor can exhibit no more of human passion and character than that small portion which overflows into the gesture and the face, always an

[1] Aristotle said so in the *Poetics*:—
ἐποποιία δὴ καὶ ἡ τῆς τραγῳδίας ποίησις, ἔτι δε κωμῳδία καὶ ἡ διθυραμβοποιητικὴ . . . πᾶσαι τυγχάνουσιν οὖσαι μιμήσεις τὸ σύνολον (*Poetics*, 1447, *a* 13-16).

imperfect, often a deceitful, sign of that which is within. The deeper and more complex parts of human nature can be exhibited by means of words alone. Thus the objects of the imitation of poetry are the whole external and the whole internal universe, the face of nature, the vicissitudes of fortune, man as he is in himself, man as he appears in society, all things which really exist, all things of which we can form an image in our minds by combining together parts of things which really exist. The domain of this imperial art is commensurate with the imaginative faculty.

An art essentially imitative ought not surely to be subjected to rules which tend to make its imitations less perfect than they otherwise would be; and those who obey such rules ought to be called, not correct, but incorrect artists. The true way to judge of the rules by which English poetry was governed during the last century is to look at the effects which they produced.

It was in 1780 that Johnson completed his Lives of the Poets. He tells us in that work that, since the time of Dryden, English poetry had shown no tendency to relapse into its original savageness, that its language had been refined, its numbers tuned, and its sentiments improved. It may perhaps be doubted whether the nation had any great reason to exult in the refinements and improvements which gave it Douglas[1] for Othello, and the Triumphs of Temper[2] for the Fairy Queen.

It was during the thirty years which preceded the appearance of Johnson's Lives that the diction and versification of English poetry were, in the sense in which the word is commonly used, most correct. Those thirty years are, as respects poetry, the most deplorable part of our literary history. They have indeed bequeathed to us scarcely any poetry which deserves to be remembered. Two or three hundred lines of Gray, twice as many of Goldsmith, a few stanzas of Beattie and Collins, a few strophes of Mason, and a few clever prologues and satires, were the masterpieces of this age of consummate excellence. They may all be printed in one volume, and that volume would be by no means a volume of extraordinary merit. It would contain no poetry of the very highest class, and little which could be placed very high in the second class. The Paradise Regained or Comus would outweigh it all.

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[1] The tragedy of "Douglas" by John Home was produced in 1756 and gained mmense applause.

[2] See below.

At last, when poetry had fallen into such utter decay that Mr. Hayley[1] was thought a great poet, it began to appear that the excess of the evil was about to work the cure. Men became tired of an insipid conformity to a standard which derived no authority from nature or reason. A shallow criticism had taught them to ascribe a superstitious value to the spurious correctness of poetasters. A deeper criticism brought them back to the true correctness of the first great masters. The eternal laws of poetry regained their power, and the temporary fashions which had superseded those laws went after the wig of Lovelace and the hoop of Clarissa.[2]

It was in a cold and barren season that the seeds of that rich harvest which we have reaped were first sown. While poetry was every year becoming more feeble and more mechanical, while the monotonous versification which Pope had introduced, no longer redeemed by his brilliant wit and his compactness of expression, palled on the ear of the public, the great works of the old masters were every day attracting more and more of the admiration which they deserved. The plays of Shakspeare were better acted, better edited, and better known than they had ever been. Our fine ancient ballads were again read with pleasure, and it became a fashion to imitate them. Many of the imitations were altogether contemptible. But they showed that men had at least begun to admire the excellence which they could not rival. A literary revolution was evidently at hand. There was a ferment in the minds of men, a vague craving for something new, a disposition to hail with delight any thing which might at first sight wear the appearance of originality. A reforming age is always fertile of impostors. The same excited state of public feeling which produced the great separation from the see of Rome produced also the excesses of the Anabaptists. The same stir in the public mind of Europe which overthrew the abuses of the old French government, produced the Jacobins and Theophilanthropists.[3] Macpherson[4] and Della Crusca[1] were to the true reformers of English poetry what Knipperdoling[2] was to Luther, or Clootz[3] to Turgot.[4] The success of Chatterton's[5] forgeries and of the far more contemptible forgeries of Ireland[6] showed that people had begun to love the old poetry well, though not wisely. The public was never more disposed to believe stories without evidence, and to admire books without merit. Any thing which could break the dull monotony of the correct school was acceptable.

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[1] William Hayley, 1745-1820, was a voluminous poet; his most successful work, *Triumphs of Temper*, published in 1781, ran through twelve or more editions. He was the friend of Cowper, and Southey declared that everything about him was good except his poetry. He is ridiculed in *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*.

[2] The hero and heroine of Richardson's *Clarissa*, a work for which Macaulay felt profound admiration.

[3] See vol. ii., p. 507.

[4] James Macpherson, 1736-1796, wrote much original verse, but is now remembered only as the professing translator of the poems of Ossian. How much was translated and how much his own is still a matter of controversy. As to the merits

The forerunner of the great restoration of our literature was Cowper.[7] His literary career began and ended at nearly the same time with that of Alfieri. A comparison between Alfieri and Cowper may, at first sight, appear as strange as that which a loyal Presbyterian minister is said to have made in 1745 between George the Second and Enoch. It may seem that the gentle, shy, melancholy Calvinist, whose spirit had been broken

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of the Ossianic poems we may set against the scornful condemnation of Johnson and Macaulay the admiration of Gray and the spell which they exercised over Goethe and Napoleon.

[1] Della Crusca was the *nom de plume* adopted by the now-forgotten versifier, Robert Merry, 1755-1798, who had once resided in Florence and been elected a member of the Della Crusca Academy in that city.

[2] See p. 123.

[3] Jean Baptiste Clootz, 1755-1794, a Prussian baron who, fired by the revolutionary enthusiasm of the eighteenth century, assumed the classic name of Anacharsis, repudiated his title and appeared at the bar of the National Assembly in July, 1790, as the ambassador of the human race at the head of a deputation professing to represent all the nations of the earth. He afterwards became a member of the Convention, voted for the death of Louis XVI. and made himself conspicuous by his bitterness against Christianity. He was executed along with Hébert by the influence of Robespierre.

[4] Anne-Robert Jacques Turgot, 1727-1781, the distinguished economist and statesman who held the office of Intendant of the Limousin from 1761 to 1774, then becoming Secretary for the Navy, and finally was Controller-General of the Finances from 1774 to 1776. He projected a series of great reforms which might have saved France from a violent revolution.

[5] Thomas Chatterton, 1752-1770, the author of the celebrated poems which he ascribed to Thomas Rowley, a supposed priest of Bristol who lived in the reigns of Henry VI. and Edward IV. Although Macaulay here implies a very low estimate of them, Chatterton has been praised by most of the great poets of the last hundred years.

[6] William Henry Ireland, 1777-1835, palmed off "Vortigern and Rowena" and "Henry II." as plays by Shakspeare. Many intelligent persons believed them authentic and Sheridan produced "Vortigern and Rowena" at Drury Lane in April, 1796. Malone exposed the deception which was soon acknowledged by the public. Ireland wrote much besides, but nothing of durable value.

[7] William Cowper, 1731-1800, published his first volume of poems in 1782, *The Task* in 1785 and a translation of Homer in 1791. His cousin, Major Cowper, wished to nominate him in 1763 to the office of Reading Clerk and Clerk of the Committees to the House of Lords, but he had not nerve to accept the nomination.

by fagging at school, who had not courage to earn a livelihood by reading the titles of bills in the House of Lords, and whose favourite associates were a blind old lady and an evangelical divine, could have nothing in common with the haughty, ardent, and voluptuous nobleman, the horse-jockey, the libertine, who fought Lord Ligonier in Hyde Park, and robbed the Pretender of his queen. But though the private lives of these remarkable men present scarcely any points of resemblance, their literary lives bear a close analogy to each other. They both found poetry in its lowest state of degradation, feeble, artificial, and altogether nerveless. They both possessed precisely the talents which fitted them for the task of raising it from that deep abasement. They cannot, in strictness, be called great poets. They had not in any very high degree the creative power,

> "The vision and the faculty divine:"[1]

but they had great vigour of thought, great warmth of feeling, and what, in their circumstances, was above all things important, a manliness of taste which approached to roughness. They did not deal in mechanical versification and conventional phrases. They wrote concerning things the thought of which set their hearts on fire; and thus what they wrote, even when it wanted every other grace, had that inimitable grace which sincerity and strong passion impart to the rudest and most homely compositions. Each of them sought for inspiration in a noble and affecting subject, fertile of images which had not yet been hackneyed. Liberty was the muse of Alfieri, Religion was the muse of Cowper. The same truth is found in their lighter pieces. They were not among those who deprecated the severity, or deplored the absence, of an unreal mistress in melodious commonplaces. Instead of raving about imaginary Chloes and Sylvias, Cowper wrote of Mrs. Unwin's knitting-needles. The only love-verses of Alfieri were addressed to one whom he truly and passionately loved.[2] "Tutte le rime amorose che seguono," says he, "tutte sono per essa, e ben sue, e di lei solamente; poichè mai d' altra donna per certo non canterò."[3]

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[1] "Oh! many are the poets that are sown
By Nature; men endowed with highest gifts,
The vision and the faculty divine."
—WORDSWORTH, *Excursion*, bk. i.

[2] The beautiful lines "To Mary," beginning:—
"The twentieth year is well-nigh past."

[3] "All the amorous rhymes that follow are for her and hers indeed, and of her only; since never assuredly of another lady will I sing."

These great men were not free from affectation. But their affectation was directly opposed to the affectation which generally prevailed. Each of them expressed, in strong and bitter language, the contempt which he felt for the effeminate poetasters who were in fashion both in England and in Italy. Cowper complains that

> "Manner is all in all, whate'er is writ,
> The substitute for genius, taste, and wit."[1]

He praised Pope; yet he regretted that Pope had

> "Made poetry a mere mechanic art,
> And every warbler had his tune by heart."[2]

Alfieri speaks with similar scorn of the tragedies of his predecessors. "Mi cadevano dalle mani per la languidezza, trivialità e prolissità dei modi e del verso, senza parlare poi della snervatezza dei pensieri. Or perchè mai questa nostra divina lingua, sì maschia anco, ed energica, e feroce, in bocca, di Dante, dovra ella farsi così sbiadata ed eunuca, nel dialogo tragico?"[3]

To men thus sick of the languid manner of their contemporaries ruggedness seemed a venial fault, or rather a positive merit. In their hatred of meretricious ornament, and of what Cowper calls "creamy smoothness,"[4] they erred on the opposite side. Their style was too austere, their versification too harsh. It is not easy, however, to overrate the service which they rendered to literature. The intrinsic value of their poems is considerable. But the example which they set of mutiny against an absurd system was invaluable. The part which they performed was rather that of Moses than that of Joshua. They opened the house of bondage; but they did not enter the promised land.

During the twenty years which followed the death of Cowper, the revolution in English poetry was fully consummated. None of the writers of this period, not even Sir Walter Scott, contributed so much to the consummation as Lord Byron. Yet Lord Byron contributed to it unwillingly, and with constant self-reproach and shame. All his tastes and inclinations led him to take part with the school of poetry which was going out against the school which was coming in. Of Pope himself he spoke with extravagant admiration. He did not venture directly to say that the little man of Twickenham was a greater poet than Shakspeare or Milton; but he hinted pretty clearly that he thought so. Of his contemporaries, scarcely any had so much of his admiration as Mr. Gifford, who, considered as a poet, was merely Pope, without Pope's wit and fancy, and whose satires are decidedly inferior in vigour and poignancy to the very imperfect juvenile performance of Lord Byron himself. He now and then praised Mr. Wordsworth and Mr. Coleridge, but ungraciously and without cordiality.[1] When he attacked them, he brought his whole soul to the work. Of the most elaborate of Mr. Wordsworth's poems he could find nothing to say, but that it was "clumsy, and frowsy, and his aversion." Peter Bell excited his spleen to such a degree that he evoked the shades of Pope and Dryden, and demanded of them whether it were possible that such trash could evade contempt? In his heart he thought his own Pilgrimage of Harold inferior to his Imitation of Horace's Art of Poetry,[2] a feeble echo of Pope and Johnson. This insipid performance he repeatedly designed to publish, and was withheld only by the solicitations of his friends. He has distinctly declared his approbation of the unities, the most absurd laws by which genius was ever held in servitude.[3] In one of his works, we think in his letter to Mr. Bowles,[4] he compares the poetry of

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[1] Cowper, *Table Talk.*

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] "They dropped from my hands because of the languor, triviality and prolixity of the measures and the verse, not to speak of the enervated character of the thoughts. Now, why should this our godlike tongue, once so masculine and energetic and proud in the mouth of Dante, why should it ever become so sickly and effeminate in tragic dialogue?" (Alfieri, *Autobiography*, year 1775.)

[4] *Table Talk.*

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[1] Byron assailed both Coleridge and Wordsworth in *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, but, as he wrote to Coleridge in 1815, "It was written when I was very young and very angry, and has been a thorn in my side ever since" (*Letters and Journals*, vol. iii., p. 192). A little later he wrote to Moore: "If poor Coleridge—who is a man of wonderful talent and in distress, and about to publish two volumes of Poesy and Biography, and who has been worse used by the critics than ever we were—will you, if he comes out, promise me to review him favourably in the *Edinburgh Review*. Praise him, I think, you must, but you will also praise him well" (*Letters and Journals*, vol. iii., pp. 232-233). Byron has elsewhere praised Wordsworth, *e.g.*, remarking that he was never vulgar. The attack upon the *Excursion* quoted by Macaulay occurs in *Don Juan*, canto iii., st. 94. In his *Journal*, under date of 24th November, 1813, Byron classified contemporary poets thus: Scott first, Rogers second, Moore and Campbell third, Southey, Wordsworth and Coleridge fourth.

[2] More exactly entitled *Hints from Horace*. This work was written in 1811, but not published in full until 1831. "Authors," says his latest editor, "are frequently bad judges of their own works, but of all the literary hallucinations upon record there are none which exceed the mistaken preferences of Lord Byron."

[3] See Preface to *Sardanapalus*.

[4] More correctly in his letter to Mr. Murray on the Rev. W. L. Bowles's *Strictures on the Life and Writings of Pope*:—

"The poetical populace of the present day . . . have raised a mosque by the side of a Grecian temple of the purest architecture and more barbarous than the

the eighteenth century to the Parthenon, and that of the nineteenth to a Turkish mosque, and boasts that, though he had assisted his contemporaries in building their grotesque and barbarous edifice, he had never joined them in defacing the remains of a chaster and more graceful architecture. In another letter he compares the change which had recently passed on English poetry to the decay of Latin poetry after the Augustan age. In the time of Pope, he tells his friend, it was all Horace with us. It is all Claudian[1] now.

For the great old masters of the art he had no very enthusiatic veneration. In his letter to Mr. Bowles he uses expressions which clearly indicate that he preferred Pope's Iliad to the original.[2] Mr. Moore confesses that his friend was no very fervent admirer of Shakspeare.[3] Of all the poets of the first class Lord Byron seems to have admired Dante and Milton most.[4] Yet in the fourth canto of Childe Harold, he places

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barbarians from whose practice I have borrowed the figure, they are not contented with their own grotesque edifice, unless they destroy the prior and purely beautiful fabric which preceded and which shames them and theirs for ever. I shall be told that amongst those I *have* been (or, it may be, still *am*) conspicuous—true, and I am ashamed of it. I have been amongst the builders of this Babel, attended by a confusion of tongues, but *never* amongst the envious destroyers of the classic temple of our predecessor."

Compare a letter to Moore written about the same time:—

"As to Pope, I have always regarded him as the greatest name in our poetry. Depend upon it, the rest are barbarians. He is a Greek temple with a Gothic cathedral on one hand and a Turkish mosque and all sorts of fantastic pagodas and conventicles about him. You may call Shakspeare and Milton pyramids, if you please, but I prefer the Temple of Thescus or the Parthenon to a mountain of burnt brick-work" (Byron to Moore, 3rd May, 1821).

[1] Claudius Claudianus, died about A.D. 404 (?), "a native of Egypt who had received the education of a Greek, assumed in a mature age the familiar use and absolute command of the Latin language, soared above the heads of his feeble contemporaries and placed himself after an interval of 300 years among the poets of ancient Rome" (Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, ch. xxx.).

[2] This is rather an unfair inference from Byron's words: "Now, with all the great and manifest and manifold and reproved and acknowledged and uncontroverted faults of Pope's translation, and all the scholarship and pains and time and trouble and blank verse of the other, who can ever read Cowper? and who will ever lay down Pope, unless for the original? . . . As a child I first read Pope's Homer with a rapture which no subsequent work could ever afford, and children are not the worst judges of their own language. As a boy, I read Homer in the original, as we have all done, some of us by force and a few by favour; under which description I come is nothing to the purpose, it is enough that I read him" (Letter to Murray on Bowles).

[3] "This puts me in mind of Lord Byron saying to me the other day: 'What do you think of Shakspeare, Moore? I think him a d—d humbug'" (Moore, *Diary*, 15th October, 1819).

[4] Byron does not name Milton in the passage to which Macaulay refers, but he addresses Tasso as "Victor unsurpassed in modern song," and adds:—

Tasso, a writer not merely inferior to them, but of quite a different order of mind, on at least a footing of equality with them. Mr. Hunt is, we suspect, quite correct in saying that Lord Byron could see little or no merit in Spenser.[1]

But Byron the critic and Byron the poet were two very different men. The effects of the noble writer's theory may indeed often be traced in his practice. But his disposition led him to accommodate himself to the literary taste of the age in which he lived; and his talents would have enabled him to accommodate himself to the taste of any age. Though he said much of his comtempt for mankind, and though he boasted that amidst the inconstancy of fortune and of fame he was all-sufficient to himself, his literary career indicated nothing of that lonely and unsocial pride which he affected. We cannot conceive him, like Milton or Wordsworth, defying the criticism of his contemporaries, retorting their scorn, and labouring on a poem in the full assurance that it would be unpopular, and in the full assurance that it would be immortal. He has said, by the mouth of one of his heroes, in speaking of political greatness, that "he must serve who fain would sway;"[2] and this he assigns as a reason for not entering into political life. He did not consider that the sway which he had exercised in literature had been purchased by servitude, by the sacrifice of his own taste to the taste of the public.

He was the creature of his age; and whenever he had lived he would have been the creature of his age. Under Charles the First Byron would have been more quaint than Donne.[3] Under Charles the Second the rants of Byron's rhyming plays would have pitted it, boxed it, and galleried it, with those of any Bayes or Bilboa.[4] Under George the First, the monotonous smoothness

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"Great as thou art, yet paralleled by those,
Thy countrymen, before thee born to shine,
The Bards of Hell and Chivalry"—

referring to Dante and Ariosto (*Childe Harold*, canto 4, st. 40).

[1] "Spenser, he could not read; at least he said so. All the gusto of that most poetical of poets went with him for nothing. I lent him a volume of the *Fairy Queen*, and he said he would try to like it. Next day he brought it to my study-window and said, 'Here, Hunt, is your Spenser, I cannot see anything in him. . . .' That he saw nothing in Spenser is not very likely; but I really do not think that he saw much" (*Byron and His Contemporaries*).

[2] *Manfred*, act iii., scene i.

[3] John Donne, 1573-1631, next to Cowley perhaps the most distinguished of the "metaphysical" poets.

[4] Bayes is the hero of "The Rehearsal" composed by Buckingham and others in ridicule of Dryden's dramatic style. In the original version the hero was named Bilboa.

of Byron's versification and the terseness of his expression would have made Pope himself envious.

As it was, he was the man of the last thirteen years of the eighteenth century, and of the first twenty-three years of the nineteenth century. He belonged half to the old, and half to the new school of poetry. His personal taste led him to the former; his thirst of praise to the latter; his talents were equally suited to both. His fame was a common ground on which the zealots on both sides, Gifford for example, and Shelley, might meet. He was the representative, not of either literary party, but of both at once, and of their conflict, and of the victory by which that conflict was terminated. His poetry fills and measures the whole of the vast interval through which our literature has moved since the time of Johnson. It touches the Essay on Man at the one extremity, and the Excursion at the other.

There are several parallel instances in literary history. Voltaire, for example, was the connecting link between the France of Lewis the Fourteenth and the France of Lewis the Sixteenth, between Racine and Boileau on the one side, and Condorcet and Beaumarchais on the other.[1] He, like Lord Byron, put himself at the head of an intellectual revolution, dreading it all the time, murmuring at it, sneering at it, yet choosing rather to move before his age in any direction than to be left behind and forgotten. Dryden was the connecting link between the literature of the age of James the First, and the literature of the age of Anne. Oromasdes and Arimanes fought for him. Arimanes carried him off. But his heart was to the last with Oromasdes. Lord Byron was, in the same manner, the mediator between two generations, between two hostile poetical sects. Though always sneering at Mr. Wordsworth, he was yet, though perhaps unconsciously, the interpreter between Mr. Wordsworth and the multitude. In the Lyrical Ballads and the Excursion[2] Mr. Wordsworth appeared as the high priest of a worship, of which nature was the idol. No poems have ever indicated a more exquisite perception of the beauty of the outer world or a more passionate love and reverence for that beauty. Yet they were not popular; and it is not likely that they ever will be popular as the poetry of Sir Walter Scott is popular. The feeling which pervaded them was too deep for general sympathy. Their style was often too mysterious for general comprehension. They made a few esoteric disciples, and many scoffers. Lord Byron founded what may be called an exoteric Lake School; and all the readers of verse in England, we might say in Europe, hastened to sit at his feet. What Mr. Wordsworth had said like a recluse, Lord Byron said like a man of the world, with less profound feeling, but with more perspicuity, energy, and conciseness. We would refer our readers to the last two cantos of Childe Harold and to Manfred, in proof of these observations.

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[1] Jean Racine, the most faultless dramatist of the French classical school, died in 1699. Nicolas Boileau-Despréaux, 1636-1711, the best satirist and critic of the same age, may be considered the French Pope. Marie Jean Nicolas Caritat, Marquis de Condorcet, 1743-1794, a mathematician, man of letters and politician, wrote the *Lives of Turgot* and *Voltaire* and a sketch for an historical picture of the progress of the Human Spirit. Pierre Augustin Caron, 1732-1799, commonly known by his title of De Beaumarchais, a celebrated comic writer, the author of the *Marriage of Figaro* and the *Barber of Seville*, has often been described as a literary forerunner of the French Revolution. Merely in point of time—Voltaire, who was born in 1694 and died in 1778, might be considered a link between the two generations, but Macaulay no doubt means that he combined a preference for the received classical forms of the age of Louis XIV. with the new ideas of the age of Louis XV.

[2] The *Lyrical Ballads* were published in 1798, the *Excursion* in 1814.

Lord Byron, like Mr. Wordsworth, had nothing dramatic in his genius. He was indeed the reverse of a great dramatist, the very antithesis to a great dramatist. All his characters, Harold looking on the sky, from which his country and the sun are disappearing together, the Giaour standing apart in the gloom of the side aisle, and casting a haggard scowl from under his long hood at the crucifix and the censer, Conrad leaning on his sword by the watch-tower, Lara smiling on the dancers, Alp gazing steadily on the fatal cloud as it passes before the moon, Manfred wandering among the precipices of Berne, Azzo on the judgment-seat, Ugo at the bar, Lambro frowning on the siesta of his daughter and Juan, Cain presenting his unacceptable offering, are essentially the same. The varieties are varieties merely of age, situation, and outward show. If ever Lord Byron attempted to exhibit men of a different kind, he always made them either insipid or unnatural. Selim is nothing. Bonnivart is nothing. Don Juan, in the first and best cantos, is a feeble copy of the Page in the Marriage of Figaro. Johnson, the man whom Juan meets in the slave-market, is a most striking failure. How differently would Sir Walter Scott have drawn a bluff, fearless Englishman, in such a situation! The portrait would have seemed to walk out of the canvass.

Sardanapalus is more coarsely drawn than any dramatic personage that we can remember. His heroism and his effeminacy, his contempt of death and his dread of a weighty helmet, his kingly resolution to be seen in the foremost ranks, and the anxiety with which he calls for a looking-glass that he may be seen to advantage, are contrasted, it is true, with all the point of Juvenal. Indeed the hint of the character seems to have been taken from what Juvenal says of Otho:

> "Speculum civilis sarcina belli.
> Nimirum summi ducis est occidere Galbam,
> Et curare cutem summi constantia civis,
> Bedriaci in campo spolium affectare Palati,
> Et pressum in faciem digitis extendere panem."[1]

These are excellent lines in a satire. But it is not the business of the dramatist to exhibit characters in this sharp antithetical way. It is not thus that Shakspeare makes Prince Hal rise from the rake of Eastcheap into the hero of Shrewsbury, and sink again into the rake of Eastcheap. It is not thus that Shakspeare has exhibited the union of effeminacy and valour in Antony. A dramatist cannot commit a greater error than that of following those pointed descriptions of character in which satirists and historians indulge so much. It is by rejecting what is natural that satirists and historians produce these striking characters. Their great object generally is to ascribe to every man as many contradictory qualities as possible: and this is an object easily attained. By judicious selection and judicious exaggeration, the intellect and the disposition of any human being might be described as being made up of nothing but startling contrasts.[2] If the dramatist attempts to create a being answering to one of these descriptions, he fails, because he reverses an imperfect analytical process. He produces, not a man, but a personified epigram. Very eminent writers have fallen into this snare. Ben Jonson has given us a Hermogenes,[3] taken from the lively lines of Horace; but the inconsistency which is so amusing in the satire appears unnatural and disgusts us in the play. Sir Walter Scott has committed a far more glaring error of the same kind in the novel of Peveril. Admiring, as every judicious reader must admire, the keen and vigorous lines in which Dryden satirised the Duke of Buckingham,[4] Sir Walter attempted to make a Duke of Buckingham to suit them, a real living Zimri; and he made, not a man, but the most grotesque of all monsters. A writer who should attempt to introduce into a play or a novel such a Wharton as the Wharton[1] of Pope, or a Lord Hervey[2] answering to Sporus, would fail in the same manner.

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[1] Juvenal, satire ii., lines 103-107.

[2] In these words Macaulay seems to satirise his own historical methods.

[3] Hermogenes Tigellius was a real personage of the time of Augustus, whose vanity, caprice and affectation are ridiculed by Horace. Ben Jonson introduced Tigellius into his "Poetaster" which was put on the stage in 1601.

[4] "In the first rank of these did Zimri stand,
A man so various that he seemed to be
Not one but all mankind's epitome;
Stiff in opinions, always in the wrong,

But to return to Lord Byron; his women, like his men, are all of one breed. Haidee is a half-savage and girlish Julia; Julia is a civilised and matronly Haidee. Leila is a wedded Zuleika, Zuleika a virgin Leila. Gulnare and Medora appear to have been intentionally opposed to each other. Yet the difference is a difference of situation only. A slight change of circumstances would, it should seem, have sent Gulnare to the lute of Medora, and armed Medora with the dagger of Gulnare.

It is hardly too much to say, that Lord Byron could exhibit only one man, and only one woman, a man proud, moody, cynical, with defiance on his brow, and misery in his heart, a scorner of his kind, implacable in revenge, yet capable of deep and strong affection: a woman all softness and gentleness, loving to caress and to be caressed, but capable of being transformed by passion into a tigress.

Even these two characters, his only two characters, he could not exhibit dramatically. He exhibited them in the manner, not of Shakspeare, but of Clarendon. He analysed them; he made them analyse themselves; but he did not make them show themselves. We are told, for example, in many lines of great force and spirit, that the speech of Lara was bitterly sarcastic, that he talked little of his travels, that if he was much ques-

Was everything by starts and nothing long;
But in the course of one revolving moon,
Was chemist, fiddler, statesman and buffoon;
Then all for women, painting, rhyming, drinking,
Beside ten thousand freaks that died in thinking.
Blest madman! who could every hour employ
With something new to wish and to enjoy!
Railing and praising were his usual themes,
And both (to show his judgment) in extremes
So very violent or over civil,
That every man with him was God or devil,
In squandering wealth was his peculiar art;
Nothing went unrewarded but desert.
Beggar'd by fools whom still he found too late;
He had his jest and they had his estate."

—*Absalom and Achitophel*, pt. i.

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[1] Philip, Duke of Wharton, 1698-1731, a clever and shameless profligate, is described in the most powerful passage of Pope's *Epistle to Lord Cobham*.

[2] John Lord Hervey of Ickworth, 1696-1743, eldest son of John, first Earl of Bristol, and author of the delightful *Memoirs*, was satirised under the name of Sporus by Pope in his *Epistle to Arbuthnot*.

tioned about them, his answers became short, and his brow gloomy. But we have none of Lara's sarcastic speeches or short answers. It is not thus that the great masters of human nature have portrayed human beings. Homer never tells us that Nestor loved to relate long stories about his youth. Shakspeare never tells us that in the mind of Iago every thing that is beautiful and endearing was associated with some filthy and debasing idea.

It is curious to observe the tendency which the dialogue of Lord Byron always has to lose its character of a dialogue, and to become soliloquy. The scenes between Manfred and the Chamois-hunter, between Manfred and the Witch of the Alps, between Manfred and the Abbot, are instances of this tendency. Manfred, after a few unimportant speeches, has all the talk to himself. The other interlocutors are nothing more than good listeners. They drop an occasional question or ejaculation which sets Manfred off again on the inexhaustible topic of his personal feelings. If we examine the fine passages in Lord Byron's dramas, the description of Rome, for example, in Manfred, the description of a Venetian revel in Marino Faliero, the concluding invective which the old doge pronounces against Venice, we shall find that there is nothing dramatic in these speeches, that they derive none of their effect from the character or situation of the speaker, and that they would have been as fine, or finer, if they had been published as fragments of blank verse by Lord Byron. There is scarcely a speech in Shakspeare of which the same could be said. No skilful reader of the plays of Shakspeare can endure to see what are called the fine things taken out, under the name of "Beauties," or of "Elegant Extracts," or to hear any single passage, "To be or not to be," for example, quoted as a sample of the great poet. "To be or not to be" has merit undoubtedly as a composition. It would have merit if put into the mouth of a chorus. But its merit as a composition vanishes when compared with its merit as belonging to Hamlet. It is not too much to say that the great plays of Shakspeare would lose less by being deprived of all the passages which are commonly called the fine passages, than those passages lose by being read separately from the play. This is perhaps the highest praise which can be given to a dramatist.

On the other hand, it may be doubted whether there is, in all Lord Byron's plays, a single remarkable passage which owes any portion of its interest or effect to its connection with the characters or the action. He has written only one scene, as far as we can recollect, which is dramatic even in manner, the scene between Lucifer and Cain. The conference is animated, and each of the interlocutors has a fair share of it. But this scene, when examined, will be found to be a confirmation of our remarks. It is a dialogue only in form. It is a soliloquy in essence. It is in reality a debate carried on within one single unquiet and sceptical mind. The questions and the answers, the objections and the solutions, all belong to the same character.

A writer who showed so little dramatic skill in works professedly dramatic was not likely to write narrative with dramatic effect. Nothing could indeed be more rude and careless than the structure of his narrative poems. He seems to have thought, with the hero of the Rehearsal, that the plot was good for nothing but to bring in fine things. His two longest works, Childe Harold and Don Juan, have no plan whatever. Either of them might have been extended to any length, or cut short at any point. The state in which the Giaour appears illustrates the manner in which all Byron's poems were constructed. They are all, like the Giaour, collections of fragments; and, though there may be no empty spaces marked by asterisks, it is still easy to perceive, by the clumsiness of the joining, where the parts for the sake of which the whole was composed end and begin.

It was in description and meditation that Byron excelled. "Description," as he said in Don Juan, "was his forte."[1] His manner is indeed peculiar, and is almost unequalled; rapid, sketchy, full of vigour; the selection happy, the strokes few and bold. In spite of the reverence which we feel for the genius of Mr. Wordsworth we cannot but think that the minuteness of his descriptions often diminishes their effect. He has accustomed himself to gaze on nature with the eye of a lover, to dwell on every feature, and to mark every change of aspect. Those beauties which strike the most negligent observer, and those which only a close attention discovers, are equally familiar to him and are equally prominent in his poetry. The proverb of old Hesiod,[2] that half is often more than the whole, is eminently applicable to description. The policy of the Dutch, who cut down most of the precious trees in the Spice Islands, in order to raise the value of what remained, was a policy which poets would do well to imitate. It was a policy which no poet understood better than Lord Byron. Whatever his faults might be, he was never, while his mind retained its vigour, accused of prolixity.

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[1] *Don Juan*, canto 5, st. 52.

[2] νήπιοι, οὐδὲ ἴσασιν ὅσῳ πλέον ἥμισυ παντός,
οὐδ᾽ ὅσον ἐν μαλάχῃ τε καὶ ἀσφοδέλῳ μέγ᾽ ὄνειαρ
(Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 40, 41).
The poet is reflecting on the unreason of princes who sell judgment for lucre.

His descriptions, great as was their intrinsic merit, derived their principal interest from the feeling which always mingled with them. He was himself the beginning, the middle, and the end, of all his own poetry, the hero of every tale, the chief object in every landscape. Harold, Lara, Manfred, and a crowd of other characters, were universally considered merely as loose incognitos of Byron; and there is every reason to believe that he meant them to be so considered.[1] The wonders of the outer world, the Tagus, with the mighty fleets of England riding on its bosom, the towers of Cintra overhanging the shaggy forests of cork-trees and willows, the glaring marble of Pentelicus, the banks of the Rhine, the glaciers of Clarens, the sweet lake of Leman, the dell of Egeria with its summer-birds and rustling lizards, the shapeless ruins of Rome overgrown with ivy and wall-flowers, the stars, the sea, the mountains, all were mere accessories, the background to one dark and melancholy figure.

Never had any writer so vast a command of the whole eloquence of scorn, misanthropy, and despair. That Marah was never dry. No art could sweeten, no draughts could exhaust, its perennial waters of bitterness. Never was there such variety in monotony as that of Byron. From maniac laughter to piercing lamentation, there was not a single note of human anguish of which he was not master. Year after year, and month after month, he continued to repeat that to be wretched is the destiny of all; that to be eminently wretched is the destiny of the eminent; that all the desires by which we are cursed, lead alike to misery, if they are not gratified, to the misery of disappointment, if they are gratified, to the misery of satiety. His heroes are men who have arrived by different roads at the same goal of despair, who are sick of life, who are at war with society, who are supported in their anguish only by an unconquerable pride resembling that of Prometheus on the rock or of Satan in the burning marl, who can master their agonies by the force of their will, and who to the last defy the whole power of earth and heaven. He always described himself as a man of the same kind with his favourite creations, as a man whose heart had been withered, whose capacity for happiness was gone and could not be restored, but whose invincible spirit dared the worst that could befall him here or hereafter.

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[1] Much too strongly stated.

How much of this morbid feeling sprang from an original disease of the mind, how much from real misfortune, how much from the nervousness of dissipation, how much was fanciful, how much was merely affected, it is impossible for us, and would probably have been impossible for the most intimate friends of Lord Byron, to decide. Whether there ever existed, or can ever exist, a person answering to the description which he gave of himself may be doubted; but that he was not such a person is beyond all doubt. It is ridiculous to imagine that a man whose mind was really imbued with scorn of his fellow-creatures would have published three or four books every year in order to tell them so; or that a man who could say with truth that he neither sought sympathy nor needed it would have admitted all Europe to hear his farewell to his wife, and his blessings on his child. In the second canto of Childe Harold, he tells us that he is insensible to fame and obloquy:

> "Ill may such contest now the spirit move,
> Which heeds nor keen reproof nor partial praise."

Yet we know on the best evidence that, a day or two before he published these lines, he was greatly, indeed childishly, elated by the compliments paid to his maiden speech in the House of Lords.

We are far, however, from thinking that his sadness was altogether feigned. He was naturally a man of great sensibility; he had been ill educated; his feelings had been early exposed to sharp trials; he had been crossed in his boyish love; he had been mortified by the failure of his first literary efforts;[1] he was straitened in pecuniary circumstances; he was unfortunate in his domestic relations; the public treated him with cruel injustice; his health and spirits suffered from his dissipated habits of life; he was, on the whole, an unhappy man. He early discovered that, by parading his unhappiness before the multitude, he produced an immense sensation. The world gave him every encouragement to talk about his mental sufferings. The interest which his first confessions excited induced him to affect much that he did not feel; and the affectation probably reacted on his feelings. How far the character in which he exhibited himself was genuine, and how far theatrical, it would probably have puzzled himself to say.

There can be no doubt that this remarkable man owed the vast influence which he exercised over his contemporaries at least as much to his gloomy egotism as to the real power of his poetry. We never could very clearly understand how it is that egotism, so unpopular in conversation, should be so popular in writing;[1] or how it is that men who affect in their compositions qualities and feelings which they have not, impose so much more easily on their contemporaries than on posterity. The interest which the loves of Petrarch excited in his own time, and the pitying fondness with which half Europe looked upon Rousseau, are well known. To readers of our age, the love of Petrarch seems to have been love of that kind which breaks no hearts, and the sufferings of Rousseau to have deserved laughter rather than pity, to have been partly counterfeited, and partly the consequences of his own perverseness and vanity.

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[1] By the first literary efforts Macaulay refers to the *Hours of Idleness* published in 1807 and roughly criticised in the *Edinburgh Review*. Byron's first love was Mary Chaworth, 1786-1832, who afterwards became Mrs. Musters.

What our grandchildren may think of the character of Lord Byron, as exhibited in his poetry, we will not pretend to guess. It is certain, that the interest which he excited during his life is without a parallel in literary history. The feeling with which young readers of poetry regarded him can be conceived only by those who have experienced it. To people who are unacquainted with real calamity, "nothing is so dainty sweet as lovely melancholy."[2] This faint image of sorrow has in all ages been considered by young gentlemen as an agreeable excitement. Old gentlemen and middle-aged gentlemen have so many real causes of sadness that they are rarely inclined "to be as sad as night only for wantonness."[3] Indeed they want the power almost as much as the inclination. We know very few persons engaged in active life who, even if they were to procure stools to be melancholy upon, and were to sit down with all the premeditation of Master Stephen,[4] would be able to enjoy much of what somebody calls the "ecstasy of woe."[5]

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[1] This is surely a very simple remark. The living egotist encroaches upon us, demands a large share of the sympathy which is exclusively due to our own sorrows and awakens all that is combative in our fierce, all-absorbing nature. The egotist in prose or verse is the mere impersonal exponent of the pain that gnaws at every heart, of the incurable will to live, of the hopeless frustration of that will by the iron order of the universe. The living egotist is the last aggravation of our sorrows; the literary egotist relieves us by giving them expression.

[2] "Then stretch our bones in a still gloomy valley.
Nothing's so dainty sweet as lovely melancholy."
—FLETCHER, "The Nice Valour," act iii., scene 3.

[3] Shakspeare, "King John," act iv., scene 1.

[4] MASTER STEPHEN. "I thank you, sir, I shall be bold, I warrant you; have you a stool there, to be melancholy upon?" (Ben Jonson, "Every Man in His Humour," act iii., scene 1.)

[5] "Where is Cupid's crimson motion?
Billowy ecstasy of woe,
Bear me straight, meandering ocean,
Where the stagnant torrents flow."
—Laura Matilda in *Rejected Addresses.*

Among that large class of young persons whose reading is almost entirely confined to works of imagination, the popularity of Lord Byron was unbounded. They bought pictures of him; they treasured up the smallest relics of him; they learned his poems by heart, and did their best to write like him, and to look like him. Many of them practised at the glass in the hope of catching the curl of the upper lip, and the scowl of the brow, which appear in some of his portraits. A few discarded their neckcloths in imitation of their great leader. For some years the Minerva press sent forth no novel without a mysterious, unhappy, Lara-like peer.[1] The number of hopeful under-graduates and medical students who became things of dark imaginings, on whom the freshness of the heart ceased to fall like dew, whose passions had consumed themselves to dust, and to whom the relief of tears was denied, passes all calculation. This was not the worst. There was created in the minds of many of these enthusiasts a pernicious and absurd association between intellectual power and moral depravity. From the poetry of Lord Byron they drew a system of ethics, compounded of misanthropy and voluptuousness, a system in which the two great commandments were, to hate your neighbour, and to love your neighbour's wife.

This affectation has passed away; and a few more years will destroy whatever yet remains of that magical potency which once belonged to the name of Byron. To us he is still a man, young, noble, and unhappy. To our children he will be merely a writer; and their impartial judgment will appoint his place among writers; without regard to his rank or to his private history. That his poetry will undergo a severe sifting, that much of what has been admired by his contemporaries will be rejected as worthless, we have little doubt. But we have as little doubt that, after the closest scrutiny, there will still remain much that can only perish with the English language.

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[1] "From the Minerva press in Leadenhall Street romances poured forth in shoals during the years before the appearance of *Waverley*" (Raleigh, *The English Novel*, p. 270).

SAMUEL JOHNSON

SEPTEMBER, 1831

NOTE ON THE ESSAY

THE review of Croker's *Boswell* is one of the best known and most characteristic of Macaulay's *Essays*. Nowhere else are the resources of his extraordinary memory, his wide range of allusion, his keen eye for the outward circumstances of a period or of an individual, his effective but fatiguing impetuosity of attack upon persons whom he disliked, and his weakness now for rhetorical commonplace, and now for rhetorical paradox, more strikingly displayed. In plan the essay is a threefold criticism of Croker, of Boswell and of Johnson himself. Macaulay found it easy to think ill of a Tory; but his detestation of Croker must have had some other ground beside difference of political opinion. It was shared indeed by Disraeli and by Thackeray who in politics were more adverse to Macaulay than to Croker. No hint as to its origin can be derived from Croker's *Correspondence* and *Diaries* which were published not many years since. An unwritten character of every well-known man circulates among his contemporaries and usually vanishes when they die. Partly derived from special knowledge, partly from loose or spiteful gossip, it takes a new colour from the sympathies or antipathies of each mind through which it passes. Believing Croker to be a very bad man Macaulay was glad to prove him a very bad editor. To what extent his scornful exhibition of Croker's ignorance and want of literary tact was justified we may judge by the words of the distinguished scholar who in our own time has made the age of Boswell and Johnson his own peculiar patrimony.

"I should be wanting in justice were I not to acknowledge that I owe much to the labours of Mr. Croker. No one can know better than I do his great failings as an editor. His remarks and criticisms far too often deserve the contempt that Macaulay so liberally poured on them. Without being deeply versed in books he was shallow in himself. Johnson's strong character was never known to him. Its breadth and depth and length and height were far beyond his measure. With his writings even he shows few signs of being familiar. Boswell's genius, a genius which even to Lord Macaulay was foolishness, was altogether hidden from his dull eye. No one, surely, but a 'blockhead,' a 'barren rascal,' could with scissors and pastepot have mangled the biography which of all others is the delight and the boast of the English-speaking world. He is careless in small matters and his blunders are numerous. These I have only noticed in the more important cases, remembering what Johnson somewhere points out that the triumphs of one critic over another only fatigue and disgust the reader. Yet he has added considerably to our knowledge of Johnson. He knew men who had intimately known both the hero and his biographer, and he gathered much that but for his care would have been lost for ever. He was diligent and successful in his search after Johnson's letters, of so many of which Boswell with all his persevering and pushing diligence had not been able to get a sight. The editor of Mr. Croker's *Correspondence* and *Diaries* goes, however, much too far when, in writing of Macaulay's criticism, he says: 'The attack defeated itself by its very violence and therefore it did the book no harm whatever. Between forty and fifty thousand copies have been sold, although Macaulay boasted with great glee that he had smashed it.' The book that Macaulay attacked was withdrawn. That monstrous medley reached no second edition. In its new form all the worst excrescences had been cleared away, and though what was left was not Boswell, still less was it unchastened Croker. His repentance, however, was not thorough. He never restored the text to its old state; wanton transpositions of passages still remain and numerous insertions break the narrative" (Dr. Birkbeck Hill, Preface to Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, pp. xxii, xxiii).

Having set down Croker for a pretentious dunce, Macaulay next represents Boswell as an officious toady. Here again truth and falsehood are evidently mingled. All that Macaulay says respecting Boswell's vices, although expressed with a severity which we may deprecate when we think each of his own failings, may pass as true in substance. Boswell had neither a masculine intellect nor a high spirit nor a fine sense of the becoming. But when Macaulay tells us that if Boswell had not been a great fool he would never have been a great writer, we are shocked with an absurdity more poignant than any which we can find in Boswell's own writings. Macaulay ventured on assertions of this kind because he wrote with the light heart of a clever youth who prepares an essay to amuse, excite and astonish a circle of friends in debate after dinner. If we are to take him seriously we find him best refuted in Carlyle's famous review of the same edition of Johnson's *Life*. A mere fool would not have recognised or loved Johnson's wit and worth or have endured for the sake of his society his unpleasant tricks of manner, his overbearing habits in discussion or his occasional lapses into the grossest incivility. A mere fool would not have selected with faultless tact the little incidents and the occasional sayings which Boswell has wrought with such unconscious art into "the most delightful narrative in the language" and one of the most consummate pictures of human nature to be found in any literature. A mere fool might indeed have written some of the passages in the *Life* which Macaulay ridicules; but if the *Life* itself could have been written by a fool, why is there not such another? There is no scarcity of biographers, and there has always been a great plenty of fools.

Macaulay's estimate of Johnson is much fairer, although even here we are too often reminded that nature had not made Macaulay a deep critic. With regard to all things human truth is an affair of degree, and in the case of literature the correct degrees are exquisitely fine. Much that Macaulay says about the union in Johnson of great powers with low or rather dogged prejudices may be fully admitted. Johnson as a critic was narrow and most unequal. Often he was led by strong sense to a right conclusion; but as often his most imperfect sense of beauty led him to a conclusion that was either conventional or absurd. Johnson's style is often wearisome and never rises to the highest standard of perfection. But Macaulay, whilst ridiculing Johnson's early manner as displayed in the *Rambler*, fails in justice to Johnson's later manner as displayed in the *Lives of the Poets*. There Johnson is often stiff, ungraceful and abrupt; but he is very often terse and vivid and forcible. The style has not ceased to be artificial, but it has become individual, and in becoming individual it has become interesting. So likewise in drawing deductions from Johnson's spoken remarks Macaulay might have remembered that most good talkers are apt to follow the impulse of the moment and to express the thought which fills their minds without adding those provisoes or qualifications which we reasonably expect from the scholar who writes a treatise. The wish to please, the wish to provoke, the wish to sparkle, the inspiration of the wine, the company or the weather may incite a man to say somewhat more than he means or something irreconcilable with what he has said formerly. With pious care Dr. Hill has shown that Johnson was neither so ignorant of country life nor so averse to travel nor so contemptuous of history as Macaulay would seem to have proved him out of his own conversation. But Macaulay is entitled to more indulgence than he would have afforded to Johnson. Though the essay on Croker's *Boswell* may not be a profound work of criticism, hundreds of thousands have read and will read it with pleasure, and not a few have owed to it a real impulse towards literature.

James Boswell, born in 1740, was the son of Alexander Boswell, a Lord of Session, better known by his title of Lord Auchinleck. He became a student in the University of Edinburgh and intended to follow his father's profession, but lacked the temperament of the successful lawyer, preferring social enjoyment and excursions into literature to the drudgery of practice. At an early age he made acquaintance with the most distinguished literary men in Edinburgh, including Lord Hailes who first taught him to revere Dr. Johnson. It was on the 16th of May, 1763, and in Mr. Davies' book shop, Russell Street, Covent Garden, that Boswell was first introduced to the Doctor. He next went to study law at Utrecht and thence travelled to Berlin, Geneva and Italy, and crossed over to Corsica where he became intimate with Paoli, the brave and accomplished leader of the Corsicans in their resistance to the French conquerors. His enthusiasm for the Corsican cause did honour to his warm heart, but it was sometimes expressed in ways which made it ridiculous. At length he returned home, was called to the Scotch bar, obtained some practice and wrote his *Account of Corsica*. In 1769 he married his cousin, Margaret Montgomerie. In 1772 he resumed his frequent intercourse with Johnson to which we owe most of the material of the *Life*. By his father's death in 1782 he gained a good estate. He afterwards joined the English bar, but kept his idle, sociable and self-indulgent habits. He was now engaged on the *Life* which appeared in 1791. His health had suffered from anxiety and the habit of drinking and he died on 26th September, 1795.[1]

[1] As Croker's edition of the *Life* in its original form is rarely accessible, the references in the notes to this essay (other than the Author's) are all to Dr. Hill's edition, but the year to which the quotation belongs is added for the convenience of readers who possess the work in any other form.

SAMUEL JOHNSON

The Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D. Including a Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides, by James Boswell, Esq. A new Edition, with numerous Additions and Notes. BY JOHN WILSON CROKER, LL.D., F.R.S. Five volumes, 8vo. London: 1831.

THIS work has greatly disappointed us. Whatever faults we may have been prepared to find in it, we fully expected that it would be a valuable addition to English literature; that it would contain many curious facts, and many judicious remarks; that the style of the notes would be neat, clear, and precise; and that the typographical execution would be, as in new editions of classical works it ought to be, almost faultless. We are sorry to be obliged to say that the merits of Mr. Croker's performance are on a par with those of a certain leg of mutton on which Dr. Johnson dined, while travelling from London to Oxford, and which he, with characteristic energy, pronounced to be "as bad as bad could be, ill fed, ill killed, ill kept, and ill dressed."[1] This edition is ill compiled, ill arranged, ill written, and ill printed.

Nothing in the work has astonished us so much as the ignorance or carelessness of Mr. Croker with respect to facts and dates. Many of his blunders are such as we should be surprised to hear any well educated gentleman commit, even in conversation. The notes absolutely swarm with misstatements, into which the editor never would have fallen, if he had taken the slightest pains to investigate the truth of his assertions, or if he had even been well acquainted with the book on which he undertook to comment. We will give a few instances.

Mr. Croker tells us in a note that Derrick,[2] who was master of the ceremonies at Bath, died very poor in 1760.[3] We read on; and, a few pages later, we find Dr. Johnson and Boswell talking of this same Derrick as still living and reigning, as having retrieved his character, as possessing so much power over his subjects at Bath, that his opposition might be fatal to Sheridan's[1] lectures on oratory.[2] And all this is in 1763. The fact is, that Derrick died in 1769.

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[1] Boswell does not specify the joint. The incident occurred in 1784 (*Life of Johnson*, vol. iv., p. 284).

[2] Samuel Derrick, 1724-1769, a native of Ireland, who forsook trade for the stage and then took to literature. He was an acquaintance of Johnson and Boswell. He became master of the ceremonies at Bath in 1761.

[3] AUTHOR'S FOOTNOTE.—I. 394.

In one note we read, that Sir Herbert Croft,[3] the author of that pompous and foolish account of Young, which appears among the Lives of the Poets, died in 1805.[4] Another note in the same volume states, that this same Sir Herbert Croft died at Paris, after residing abroad for fifteen years, on the 27th of April, 1816.[5]

Mr. Croker informs us, that Sir William Forbes[6] of Pitsligo, the author of the Life of Beattie, died in 1816.[7] A Sir William Forbes undoubtedly died in that year, but not the Sir William Forbes in question, whose death took place in 1806. It is notorious, indeed, that the biographer of Beattie lived just long enough to complete the history of his friend. Eight or nine years before the date which Mr. Croker has assigned for William's death, Sir Walter Scott lamented that event in the introduction to the fourth canto of Marmion. Every school-girl knows the lines:

"Scarce had lamented Forbes paid
The tribute to his Minstrel's shade;
The tale of friendship scarce was told,
Ere the narrator's heart was cold:
Far may we search before we find
A heart so manly and so kind!"

In one place, we are told, that Allan Ramsay, the painter, was born in 1709, and died in 1784;[8] in another, that he died in 1784, in the seventy-first year of his age.[9]

In one place, Mr. Croker says, that at the commencement of the intimacy between Dr. Johnson and Mrs. Thrale,[10] in 1765, the lady was twenty-five years old.[1] In other places he says, that Mrs. Thrale's thirty-fifth year coincided with Johnson's seventieth.[2] Johnson was born in 1709. If, therefore, Mrs. Thrale's thirty-fifth year coincided with Johnson's seventieth, she could have been only twenty-one years old in 1765. This is not all. Mr. Croker, in another place, assigns the year 1777 as the date of the complimentary lines which Johnson made on Mrs. Thrale's thirty-fifth birth-day.[3] If this date be correct, Mrs. Thrale must have been born in 1742, and could have been only twenty-three when her acquaintance with Johnson commenced. Mr. Croker therefore gives us three different statements as to her age. Two of the three must be incorrect. We will not decide between them; we will only say, that the reasons which Mr. Croker gives for thinking that Mrs. Thrale was exactly thirty-five years old when Johnson was seventy, appear to us utterly frivolous.

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[1] Thomas Sheridan, 1719-1788, father of the famous Richard Brinsley Sheridan.

[2] AUTHOR'S FOOTNOTE.—I. 404.

[3] Herbert Croft, Sir, bart., 1751-1816, a voluminous author of little merit. He was asked to write a memoir of the poet Young, having been intimate with Frederick, his son, and, being a friend of Johnson, he gave him the MS. which Johnson published in his *Lives of the Poets* with only one omission. Of this memoir Burke said that "it has all the contortions of the Sibyl without the inspiration."

[4] AUTHOR'S FOOTNOTE.—IV. 321.

[5] *Ibid.*—IV. 428.

[6] William Forbes, Sir, 1739-1806, a banker and literary man and a member of Johnson's club. His account of the *Life and Writings of James Beattie, LL.D.*, was published in the year of his death.

[7] AUTHOR'S FOOTNOTE.—II. 262.

[8] *Ibid.*—IV. 105.

[9] *Ibid.*—V. 281.

[10] Hester Lynch Salusbury, 1741-1821, who married Mr. Henry Thrale the wealthy brewer in 1763 and became acquainted with Johnson towards the close of 1764 when she was in her twenty-fourth year. Mr. Thrale died in February, 1780,

Again, Mr. Croker informs his readers that "Lord Mansfield[4] survived Johnson full ten years."[5] Lord Mansfield survived Dr. Johnson just eight years and a quarter.

Johnson found in the library of a French lady, whom he visited during his short visit to Paris, some works which he regarded with great disdain. "I looked," says he, "into the books in the lady's closet, and, in contempt, showed them to Mr. Thrale. Prince Titi, Bibliothèque des Fées, and other books."[6] "The History of Prince Titi," observes Mr. Croker, "was said to be the autobiography of Frederick Prince of Wales, but was probably written by Ralph his secretary." A more absurd note never was penned. The history of Prince Titi, to which Mr. Croker refers, whether written by Prince Frederick or by Ralph, was certainly never published. If Mr. Croker had taken the trouble to read with attention that very passage in Park's Royal and Noble Authors which he cites as his authority, he would have seen that the manuscript was given up to the government. Even if this memoir had been printed, it is not very likely to find its way into

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and in July, 1783, she married Gabriel Piozzi, a musician and a Roman Catholic. Her intimacy with Piozzi ended her intimacy with Johnson. The best known of her writings are the *Anecdotes of Samuel Johnson* published in 1786 and *Letters to and from Samuel Johnson* published in 1788. She survived her husband and died in May, 1821.

[1] AUTHOR'S FOOTNOTE.—I. 510.

[2] *Ibid.*—IV. 271, 322.

[3] *Ibid.*—III. 463.

[4] William Murray, first Earl of Mansfield, the celebrated Lord Chief Justice. The precise date of his death was 20th March, 1793.

[5] AUTHOR'S FOOTNOTE.—II. 151.

[6] *Ibid.*—III. 271.

a French lady's bookcase. And would any man in his senses speak contemptuously of a French lady, for having in her possession an English work, so curious and interesting as a Life of Prince Frederick, whether written by himself or by a confidential secretary, must have been? The history at which Johnson laughed was a very proper companion to the Bibliothèque des Fées, a fairy tale about good Prince Titi and naughty Prince Violent. Mr. Croker may find it in the Magasin des Enfans, the first French book which the little girls of England read to their governesses.

Mr. Croker states that Mr. Henry Bate,[1] who afterwards assumed the name of Dudley, was the proprietor of the Morning Herald, and fought a duel with George Robinson Stoney, in consequence of some attacks on Lady Strathmore which appeared in that paper.[2] Now Mr. Bate was then connected, not with the Morning Herald, but with the Morning Post; and the dispute took place before the Morning Herald was in existence. The duel was fought in January, 1777. The Chronicle of the Annual Register for that year contains an account of the transaction, and distinctly states that Mr. Bate was editor of the Morning Post. The Morning Herald, as any person may see by looking at any number of it, was not established till some years after this affair. For this blunder there is, we must acknowledge, some excuse; for it certainly seems almost incredible to a person living in our time that any human being should ever have stooped to fight with a writer in the Morning Post.

"James de Duglas," [3] says Mr. Croker, "was requested by King Robert Bruce, in his last hours, to repair, with his heart, to Jerusalem, and humbly to deposit it at the sepulchre of our Lord, which he did in 1329." [4] Now, it is well known that he did no such thing, and for a very sufficient reason, because he was killed by the way. Nor was it in 1329 that he set out. Robert Bruce died in 1329, and the expedition of Douglas took place in the following year, "Quand le printems vint et la saison," says Froissart, in June, 1330, says Lord Hailes, whom Mr. Croker cites as the authority for his statement.

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[1] Henry Bate Dudley, Sir, 1745-1824. He was a clergyman, a man about town and one of the first editors of the *Morning Post*. He became known as the Fighting Parson. In 1780 he quitted the *Morning Post* and established the *Morning Herald*.

[2] AUTHOR'S FOOTNOTE.—V. 196.

[3] James de Duglas, 1286(?)-1330, the Good Lord of Douglas, the celebrated companion in arms of Robert Bruce, was charged by him on his deathbed to carry his heart to the Holy Land. Douglas went first to Flanders and then to Spain where he joined Alfonso XI., King of Castile, in his warfare against Granada. Overwhelmed by numbers he fell in battle. It is said that he flung the casket containing Bruce's heart among the Moorish ranks, exclaiming, "Onward as thou wert wont, Douglas will follow thee," and charged after. The battle is supposed to have been fought on the 25th August, 1330; Bruce's heart was recovered and brought back to Scotland.

[4] AUTHOR'S FOOTNOTE.—IV. 29.

Mr. Croker tells us that the great Marquis of Montrose[1] was beheaded at Edinburgh in 1650.[2] There is not a forward boy at any school in England who does not know that the marquis was hanged. The account of the execution is one of the finest passages in Lord Clarendon's History. We can scarcely suppose that Mr. Croker has never read that passage; and yet we can scarcely suppose that any person who has ever perused so noble and pathetic a story can have utterly forgotten all its most striking circumstances.

"Lord Townshend,"[3] says Mr. Croker, "was not secretary of state till 1720."[4] Can Mr. Croker possibly be ignorant that Lord Townshend was made secretary of state at the accession of George the First in 1714, that he continued to be secretary of state till he was displaced by the intrigues of Sunderland and Stanhope at the close of 1716, and that he returned to the office of secretary of state, not in 1720, but in 1721?

Mr. Croker, indeed, is generally unfortunate in his statements respecting the Townshend family. He tells us that Charles Townshend,[5] the chancellor of the exchequer, was "nephew of the prime minister, and son of a peer who was secretary of state, and leader of the House of Lords."[6] Charles Townshend was not nephew, but grandnephew, of the Duke of Newcastle, not son, but grandson, of the Lord Townshend who was secretary of state, and leader of the House of Lords.

"General Burgoyne[7] surrendered at Saratoga," says Mr. Croker,

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[1] James Graham, first Marquess of Montrose, 1612-1650, the celebrated general of Charles I. who made an attempt to conquer Scotland for Charles II. but was captured in April, 1650, and executed on 21st May, 1650. The passage referred to by Macaulay will be found in book xii., 135-140.

[2] AUTHOR'S FOOTNOTE.—II. 526.

[3] Charles, second Viscount Townshend, 1674-1738, the friend, brother-in-law and colleague of Sir Robert Walpole.

[4] AUTHOR'S FOOTNOTE.—III. 52.

[5] Charles Townshend, 1725-1767, who was Chancellor of the Exchequer in Lord Chatham's Administration and contributed to the secession of the American colonies by his duties on tea and other articles, was son of Charles, third Viscount Townshend. His grandmother, Elizabeth, wife of the Lord Townshend above mentioned, was a Pelham and sister to the Duke of Newcastle.

[6] AUTHOR'S FOOTNOTE.—III. 368.

[7] John Burgoyne, 1722-1792, who, in the campaign of 1777 against the American rebels, led an army from Canada to join Sir William Howe's troops at Albany, but was intercepted by General Gates and forced to surrender.

"in March, 1778."[1] General Burgoyne surrendered on the 17th of October, 1777.

"Nothing," says Mr. Croker, "can be more unfounded than the assertion that Byng[2] fell a martyr *to political party*. By a strange coincidence of circumstances, it happened that there was a total change of administration between his condemnation and his death: so that one party presided at his trial, and another at his execution: there can be no stronger proof that he was *not* a political martyr."[3] Now what will our readers think of this writer, when we assure them that this statement, so confidently made, respecting events so notorious, is absolutely untrue? One and the same administration was in office when the court-martial on Byng commenced its sittings, through the whole trial, at the condemnation, and at the execution. In the month of November, 1756, the Duke of Newcastle and Lord Hardwicke resigned; the Duke of Devonshire became first lord of the treasury, and Mr. Pitt, secretary of state. This administration lasted till the month of April, 1757. Byng's court-martial began to sit on the 28th of December, 1756. He was shot on the 14th of March, 1757. There is something at once diverting and provoking in the cool and authoritative manner in which Mr. Croker makes these random assertions. We do not suspect him of intentionally falsifying history. But of this high literary misdemeanour we do without hesitation accuse him, that he has no adequate sense of the obligation which a writer, who professes to relate facts, owes to the public. We accuse him of a negligence and an ignorance analogous to that *crassa negligentia,* and that *crassa ignorantia,* on which the law animadverts in magistrates and surgeons, even when malice and corruption are not imputed. We accuse him of having undertaken a work which, if not performed with strict accuracy, must be very much worse than useless, and of having performed it as if the difference between an accurate and an inaccurate statement was not worth the trouble of looking into the most common book of reference.

. But we must proceed. These volumes contain mistakes more gross, if possible, than any that we have yet mentioned. Boswell has recorded some observations made by Johnson on the changes which had taken place in Gibbon's religious opinions. That

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[1] AUTHOR'S FOOTNOTE.—IV. 222.

[2] Admiral John Byng, 1704-1757, who was condemned and executed for not having done more to relieve Minorca when besieged by the French under the Duke of Richelieu in 1756.

[3] AUTHOR'S FOOTNOTE.—I. 298.

Gibbon when a lad at Oxford turned Catholic is well known. "It is said," cried Johnson, laughing, "that he has been a Mahommedan." [1] "This sarcasm," says the editor, "probably alludes to the tenderness with which Gibbon's malevolence to Christianity induced him to treat Mahommedanism in his history." Now the sarcasm was uttered in 1776; and that part of the History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire which relates to Mahommedanism was not published till 1788, twelve years after the date of this conversation, and near four years after the death of Johnson.[2]

"It was in the year 1761," says Mr. Croker, "that Goldsmith published his Vicar of Wakefield. This leads the editor to observe a more serious inaccuracy of Mrs. Piozzi, than Mr. Boswell notices, when she says Johnson left her table to go and sell the Vicar of Wakefield for Goldsmith. Now Dr. Johnson was not acquainted with the Thrales till 1765, four years after the book had been published." [3] Mr. Croker, in reprehending the fancied inaccuracy of Mrs. Thrale, has himself shown a degree of inaccuracy, or, to speak more properly, a degree of ignorance, hardly credible. In the first place, Johnson became acquainted with the Thrales, not in 1765, but in 1764, and during the last weeks of 1764 dined with them every Thursday, as is written in Mrs. Piozzi's anecdotes. In the second place, Goldsmith published the Vicar of Wakefield, not in 1761, but in 1766.[4] Mrs. Thrale does not pretend to remember the precise date of the summons which called Johnson from her table to the help of his friend. She says only that it was near the beginning of her acquaintance with Johnson, and certainly not later than 1766. Her accuracy is therefore completely vindicated. It was probably after one of her Thursday dinners in 1764 that the celebrated scene of the landlady, the sheriff's officer, and the bottle of Madeira, took place.[1]

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[1] Boswell, vol. ii., p. 448 (year 1776).

[2] AUTHOR'S FOOTNOTE.—A defence of this blunder was attempted. That the celebrated chapters in which Gibbon has traced the progress of Mahommedanism were not written in 1776 could not be denied. But it was confidently asserted that his partiality to Mahommedanism appeared in his first volume. This assertion is untrue. No passage which can by any art be construed into the faintest indication of the faintest partiality for Mahommedanism has ever been quoted or ever will be quoted from the first volume of the History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.

To what, then, it has been asked, could Johnson allude? Possibly to some anecdote or some conversation of which all trace is lost. One conjecture may be offered, though with diffidence. Gibbon tells us in his memoirs, that at Oxford he took a fancy for studying Arabic, and was prevented from doing so by the remonstrances of his tutor. Soon after this, the young man fell in with Bossuet's controversial writings, and was speedily converted by them to the Roman Catholic faith. The apostasy of a gentleman commoner would of course be for a time the chief subject of conversation in the common room of Magdalene. His whim about Arabic learning would naturally be mentioned, and would give occasion to some jokes about the probability of his turning Mussulman. If such jokes were made, Johnson, who frequently visited Oxford, was very likely to hear of them.

[3] *Ibid.*—V. 409.

[4] Although the *Vicar of Wakefield* was published in 1766 it should seem that the manuscript was sold to the publisher in 1762 (see Dr. Hill's note on this point, *Life*, i., p. 415).

The very page which contains this monstrous blunder, contains another blunder, if possible, more monstrous still. Sir Joseph Mawbey,[2] a foolish member of Parliament, at whose speeches and whose pig-styes the wits of Brookes's were, fifty years ago, in the habit of laughing most unmercifully, stated, on the authority of Garrick, that Johnson, while sitting in a coffee-house at Oxford, about the time of his doctor's degree, used some contemptuous expressions respecting Home's play and Macpherson's Ossian. "Many men," he said, "many women, and many children, might have written Douglas." Mr. Croker conceives that he has detected an inaccuracy, and glories over poor Sir Joseph in a most characteristic manner. "I have quoted this anecdote solely with the view of showing to how little credit hearsay anecdotes are in general entitled. Here is a story published by Sir Joseph Mawbey, a member of the House of Commons, and a person every way worthy of credit, who says he had it from Garrick. Now mark: Johnson's visit to Oxford, about the time of his doctor's degree, was in 1754, the first time he had been there since he left the university. But Douglas was not acted till 1756, and Ossian not published till 1760. All, therefore, that is new in Sir Joseph Mawbey's story is false."[3] Assuredly we need not go far to find ample proof that a member of the House of Commons may commit a very gross error. Now mark, say we, in the language of Mr. Croker. The fact is, that Johnson took his Master's degree in 1754,[4] and his Doctor's degree in 1775.[5] In the spring of 1776,[6] he paid a visit to Oxford, and at this visit a conversation respecting the works of Home and Macpherson might have taken place, and, in all probability, did take place. The only real objection to the story Mr. Croker has missed. Boswell states, apparently on the best authority, that, as early at least as the year 1763, Johnson, in conversation with Blair, used the same expressions respecting Ossian,[1] which Sir Joseph represents him as having used respecting Douglas.[2] Sir Joseph, or Garrick, confounded, we suspect, the two stories. But their error is venial, compared with that of Mr. Croker.

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[1] AUTHOR'S FOOTNOTE.—This paragraph has been altered; and a slight inaccuracy immaterial to the argument, has been removed.

[2] Joseph Mawbey, Sir, 1730-1798, a distiller and squire who was elected member for Southwark in 1761 and thus became Thrale's colleague. He afterwards sat for Surrey. The Whigs made him a baronet in 1765. Walpole describes him (*Memoirs of George III.*, vol. iii., ch. viii.) as "vain, noisy and foolish." He took up the cause of Wilkes at first in compliance with his constituents, but afterwards with zeal of his own. For his pig-styes see Probationary Odes, No. iii.

[3] AUTHOR'S FOOTNOTE.—V. 409.

[4] *Ibid.*—I. 262.

[5] *Ibid.*—III. 205.

[6] *Ibid.*—III. 326.

We will not multiply instances of this scandalous inaccuracy. It is clear that a writer who, even when warned by the text on which he is commenting, falls into such mistakes as these, is entitled to no confidence whatever. Mr. Croker has committed an error of five years with respect to the publication of Goldsmith's novel, an error of twelve years with respect to the publication of part of Gibbon's History, an error of twenty-one years with respect to an event in Johnson's life so important as the taking of the doctoral degree. Two of these three errors he has committed, while ostentatiously displaying his own accuracy, and correcting what he represents as the loose assertions of others. How can his readers take on trust his statements concerning the births, marriages, divorces, and deaths of a crowd of people, whose names are scarcely known to this generation? It is not likely that a person who is ignorant of what almost every body knows can know that of which almost every body is ignorant. We did not open this book with any wish to find blemishes in it. We have made no curious researches. The work itself, and a very common knowledge of literary and political history, have enabled us to detect the mistakes which we have pointed out, and many other mistakes of the same kind. We must say, and we say it with regret, that we do not consider the authority of Mr. Croker, unsupported by other evidence, as sufficient to justify any writer who may follow him in relating a single anecdote or in assigning a date to a single event.

Mr. Croker shows almost as much ignorance and heedlessness in his criticisms as in his statements concerning facts. Dr. Johnson said, very reasonably as it appears to us, that some of the satires of Juvenal are too gross for imitation. Mr. Croker, who, by the way, is angry with Johnson, for defending Prior's tales against the charge of indecency, resents this aspersion on Juvenal, and indeed refuses to believe that the doctor can have said any thing so absurd. "He probably said—some *passages* of them—for there are none of Juvenal's satires to which the same objection may be made as to one of Horace's, that it is *altogether* gross and licentious."[1] Surely Mr. Croker can never have read the second and ninth satires of Juvenal.

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[1] Boswell, vol. i., p. 396 (year 1763).

[2] AUTHOR'S FOOTNOTE.—I. 405.

Indeed the decisions of this editor on points of classical learning, though pronounced in a very authoritative tone, are generally such that, if a schoolboy under our care were to utter them, our soul assuredly should not spare for his crying. It is no disgrace to a gentleman who has been engaged during near thirty years in political life that he has forgotten his Greek and Latin. But he becomes justly ridiculous if, when no longer able to construe a plain sentence, he affects to sit in judgment on the most delicate questions of style and metre. From one blunder, a blunder which no good scholar would have made, Mr. Croker was saved, as he informs us, by Sir Robert Peel, who quoted a passage exactly in point from Horace.[2] We heartily wish that Sir Robert, whose classical attainments are well known, had been more frequently consulted. Unhappily he was not always at his friend's elbow; and we have therefore a rich abundance of the strangest errors. Boswell has preserved a poor epigram by Johnson, inscribed "Ad Lauram parituram." Mr. Croker censures the poet for applying the word puella to a lady in Laura's situation, and for talking of the beauty of Lucina. "Lucina," he says, "was never famed for her beauty."[3] If Sir Robert Peel had seen this note, he probably would have again refuted Mr. Croker's criticisms by an appeal to Horace. In the secular ode,[4] Lucina is used as one of the names of Diana, and the beauty of Diana is extolled by all the most orthodox doctors of the ancient mythology, from Homer in his Odyssey, to Claudian in his Rape of Proserpine. In another ode, Horace describes Diana as the goddess who assists the "laborantes utero puellas."[1] But we are ashamed to detain our readers with this fourth-form learning.

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[1] AUTHOR'S FOOTNOTE.—I. 167.

[2] With reference to one of Johnson's Latin poems, Croker remarked: "It has been observed as strange that so nice a critic as Johnson should have within six lines made the first syllable of *libris* both long and short." But Mr. Peel (to whom the above was repeated) reminded the editor with happy readiness that Horace had done the same:—

"Curam redde brevem, si munus Apolline dignum
Vis complere libris, et vatibus addere calcar,
Ut studio maiore petant Helicona virentem.
Multa quidem nobis facimus mala sæpe poëtæ,
(Ut vineta egomet cædam mea) cum tibi librum
Sollicito damus aut fesso: . . ."
—HORACE, *Epistles*, bk. i., ep. ii., v. 216-221.

[3] AUTHOR'S FOOTNOTE.—I. 133.

[4] "Rite maturos aperire partus
Lenis Ilithyia, tuere matres:
Sive tu Lucina probas vocari,
Seu Genitalis."
—HORACE, *Carmen Sæculare*, lines 13-16.

Boswell found, in his tour to the Hebrides, an inscription written by a Scotch minister.[2] It runs thus: "Joannes Macleod, &c., gentis suæ Philarchus, &c., Floræ Macdonald matrimoniali vinculo conjugatus turrem hanc Beganodunensem proævorum habitaculum longe vetustissimum, diu penitus labefactatam, anno æræ vulgaris MDCLXXXVI. instauravit."—"The minister," says Mr. Croker, "seems to have been no contemptible Latinist. Is not Philarchus a very happy term to express the paternal and kindly authority of the head of a clan?"[3] The composition of this eminent Latinist, short as it is, contains several words that are just as much Coptic as Latin, to say nothing of the incorrect structure of the sentence. The word Philarchus, even if it were a happy term expressing a paternal and kindly authority, would prove nothing for the minister's Latin, whatever it might prove for his Greek. But it is clear that the word Philarchus means, not a man who rules by love, but a man who loves rule. The Attic writers of the best age used the word φίλαρχος in the sense which we assign to it. Would Mr. Croker translate φιλόσοφος, a man who acquires wisdom by means of love, or φιλοκερδὴς, a man who makes money by means of love? In fact, it requires no Bentley or Casaubon to perceive, that Philarchus is merely a false spelling for Phylarchus, the chief of a tribe.

Mr. Croker has favoured us with some Greek of his own. "At the altar," says Dr. Johnson, "I recommended my θ φ." "These letters," says the editor, "(which Dr. Strahan seems not to have understood) probably mean θνητοι φιλοι, *departed friends.*"[4] Johnson was not a first-rate Greek scholar; but he knew more Greek than most boys when they leave school; and no schoolboy could venture to use the word *θνητοι* in the sense which Mr. Croker ascribes to it without imminent danger of a flogging.

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[1] "Montium custos nemorumque, Virgo,
Quæ laborantes utero puellas
Ter vocata, audis, adimisque leto,
Diva triformis."
—HORACE, *Odes*, bk. iii., ode xxii.

[2] Boswell, v., 234 (*Journal*).

[3] AUTHOR'S FOOTNOTE.—II. 458.

[4] *Ibid.*—IV. 251. An attempt was made to vindicate this blunder by quoting a grossly corrupt passage from the Ἱκέτιδες of Euripides:

βᾶθι καὶ ἀντίασον γονάτων, ἔπι χεῖρα βαλοῦσα,
τέκνων τε θνατῶν κομίσαι δέμας.

The true reading, as every scholar knows, is, τέκνων τεθνεώτων κομίσαι δέμας. Indeed without this emendation it would not be easy to construe the words, even if θνατῶν could bear the meaning which Mr. Croker assigns to it.

Mr. Croker has also given us a specimen of his skill in translating Latin. Johnson wrote a note in which he consulted his friend, Dr. Lawrence, on the propriety of losing some blood. The note contains these words:—"Si per te licet, imperatur nuncio Holderum ad me deducere." Johnson should rather have written "imperatum est." But the meaning of the words is perfectly clear. "If you say yes, the messenger has orders to bring Holder to me." Mr. Croker translates the words as follows: "If you consent, pray tell the messenger to bring Holder to me."[1] If Mr. Croker is resolved to write on points of classical learning, we would advise him to begin by giving an hour every morning to our old friend Corderius.[2]

Indeed we cannot open any volume of this work in any place, and turn it over for two minutes in any direction, without lighting on a blunder. Johnson, in his life of Tickell, stated that a poem entitled The Royal Progress, which appears in the last volume of the Spectator, was written on the accession of George the First. The word "arrival" was afterwards substituted for "accession." "The reader will observe," says Mr. Croker, "that the Whig term *accession*, which might imply legality, was altered into a statement of the simple fact of King George's *arrival*."[3] Now Johnson, though a bigoted Tory, was not quite such a fool as Mr. Croker here represents him to be. In the Life of Granville, Lord Lansdowne, which stands a very few pages from the Life of Tickell, mention is made of the accession of Anne, and of the accession of George the First. The word arrival was used in the life of Tickell for the simplest of all reasons. It was used because the subject of the poem called The Royal Progress was the arrival of the king, and not his accession, which took place near two months before his arrival.

The editor's want of perspicacity is indeed very amusing. He is perpetually telling us that he cannot understand something in the text which is as plain as language can make it. "Mattaire,"[4] said Dr. Johnson, "wrote Latin verses from time to time, and published a set in his old age, which he called *Senilia,* in which he shows so little learning or taste in writing, as to make Carteret a dactyl."[1] Hereupon we have this note: "The editor does not understand this objection, nor the following observation." The following observation, which Mr. Croker cannot understand, is simply this: "In matters of genealogy," says Johnson, "it is necessary to give the bare names as they are. But in poetry and in prose of any elegance in the writing, they require to have inflection given to them." If Mr. Croker had told Johnson that this was unintelligible, the doctor would probably have replied, as he replied on another occasion, "I have found you a reason, sir; I am not bound to find you an understanding."[2] Every body who knows any thing of Latinity knows that, in genealogical tables, Joannes Baro de Carteret, or Vice-comes de Carteret, may be tolerated, but that in compositions which pretend to elegance, Carteretus, or some other form which admits of inflection, ought to be used.

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[1] AUTHOR'S FOOTNOTE.—V. 17.

[2] Mathurin Cordier, 1478-1564, a notable Latinist who wrote schoolbooks such as the *Principia Latine loquendi scribendique, sive selecta quædam ex Ciceronis epistolis ad pueros in Latina lingua exercendos* and *Colloquiorum centuria selecta.*

[3] AUTHOR'S FOOTNOTE.—IV. 425.

[4] Michael Maittaire, 1668-1747, of Huguenot descent, an industrious and learned writer and the collector of a large library. He published in 1709 the *Lives of the*

All our readers have doubtless seen the two distichs of Sir William Jones,[3] respecting the division of the time of a lawyer. One of the distichs is translated from some old Latin lines; the other is original. The former runs thus:

"Six hours to sleep, to law's grave study six,
Four spend in prayer, the rest on nature fix."

"Rather," says Sir William Jones,

"Six hours to law, to soothing slumbers seven,
Ten to the world allot, and all to heaven."

The second couplet puzzles Mr. Croker strangely. "Sir William," says he, "has shortened his day to twenty-three hours, and the general advice of 'all to heaven,' destroys the peculiar appropriation of a certain period to religious exercises."[4] Now,

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Stephani, between 1719 and 1741 *Annales Typographici*, and his *Senilia* in 1742. At one time he was tutor to Chesterfield's son, Philip Stanhope.

[1] AUTHOR'S FOOTNOTE.—IV. 335.

[2] "Johnson having argued for some time with a pertinacious gentleman, his opponent, who had talked in a very puzzling manner, happened to say, 'I don't understand you, sir;' upon which Johnson observed, 'Sir, I have found you an argument; but I am not obliged to find you an understanding'" (Boswell, iv., 313, year 1784).

[3] William Jones, Sir, 1746-1794, an eminent lawyer, but chiefly known as a great Oriental scholar. He was the first Englishman to master the Sanskrit language and literature.

[4] AUTHOR'S FOOTNOTE.—V. 233.

we did not think that it was in human dulness to miss the meaning of the lines so completely. Sir William distributes twenty-three hours among various employments. One hour is thus left for devotion. The reader expects that the verse will end with "and one to heaven." The whole point of the lines consists in the unexpected substitution of "all" for "one." The conceit is wretched enough; but it is perfectly intelligible, and never, we will venture to say, perplexed man, woman, or child before.

Poor Tom Davies,[1] after failing in business, tried to live by his pen. Johnson called him "an author generated by the corruption of a bookseller." This is a very obvious, and even a commonplace allusion to the famous dogma of the old physiologists.[2] Dryden made a similar allusion to that dogma before Johnson was born. Mr. Croker, however, is unable to understand what the doctor meant. "The expression," he says, "seems not quite clear." And he proceeds to talk about the generation of insects, about bursting into gaudier life, and Heaven knows what.[3]

There is a still stranger instance of the editor's talent for finding out difficulty in what is perfectly plain. "No man," said Johnson, "can now be made a bishop for his learning and piety." "From this too just observation," says Boswell, "there are some eminent exceptions." Mr. Croker is puzzled by Boswell's very natural and simple language. "That a general observation should be pronounced *too just*, by the very person who admits that it is not universally just, is not a little odd." [4]

A very large proportion of the two thousand five hundred notes which the editor boasts of having added to those of Boswell and Malone consists of the flattest and poorest reflections, reflections such as the least intelligent reader is quite competent to make for himself, and such as no intelligent reader would think it worth while to utter aloud. They remind us of nothing so much as of those profound and interesting annotations which are penciled by sempstresses and apothecaries' boys on the dog-eared margins of novels borrowed from circulating libraries; "How beautiful!" "Cursed Prosy!" "I don't like Sir Reginald Malcolm at all." "I think Pelham is a sad dandy." Mr. Croker is perpetually stopping us in our progress through the most delightful narrative in the language, to observe that really Dr. Johnson was very rude, that he talked more for victory than for truth, that his taste for port wine with capillaire in it was very odd, that Boswell was impertinent, that it was foolish in Mrs. Thrale to marry the music-master; and so forth.

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[1] Thomas Davies, 1712-1785, at different times actor, bookseller and author, who did mankind the great service of introducing Boswell to Johnson. He is frequently mentioned in the *Life*.

[2] "A few days after those that watched the hanging body of Cleomenes saw a large snake winding about his head and covering his face so that no bird of prey would fly at it. . . . And the Alexandrians made processions to the place and gave Cleomenes the title of hero and son of the gods till the philosophers satisfied them by saying that as oxen breed bees, putrifying horses breed wasps, and beetles rise from the carcasses of dead asses, so the humours and juices of the marrow of a dead man's body coagulating produce serpents" (Plutarch, *Life of Cleomenes*, translated by Clough). The latter part of Virgil's fourth Georgic turns on the same fancy.

[3] AUTHOR'S FOOTNOTE.—IV. 323.

[4] *Ibid.*—III. 228.

We cannot speak more favourably of the manner in which the notes are written than of the matter of which they consist. We find in every page words used in wrong senses, and constructions which violate the plainest rules of grammar. We have the vulgarism of "mutual friend," for "common friend." We have "fallacy" used as synonymous with "falsehood." We have many such inextricable labyrinths of pronouns as that which follows: "Lord Erskine was fond of this anecdote; he told it to the editor the first time that he had the honour of being in his company." Lastly, we have a plentiful supply of sentences resembling those which we subjoin. "Markland, *who,* with Jortin and Thirlby, Johnson calls three contemporaries of great eminence."[1] "Warburton himself did not feel, as Mr. Boswell was disposed to think he did, kindly or gratefully *of* Johnson."[2] "It was *him* that Horace Walpole called a man who never made a bad figure but as an author."[3] One or two of these solecisms should perhaps be attributed to the printer, who has certainly done his best to fill both the text and the notes with all sorts of blunders. In truth, he and the editor have between them made the book so bad, that we do not well see how it could have been worse.

When we turn from the commentary of Mr. Croker to the work of our old friend Boswell, we find it not only worse printed than in any other edition with which we are acquainted, but mangled in the most wanton manner. Much that Boswell inserted in his narrative is, without the shadow of a reason, degraded to the appendix. The editor has also taken upon himself to alter or omit passages which he considers as indecorous. This prudery is quite unintelligible to us. There is nothing immoral in Boswell's book, nothing which tends to inflame the passions. He sometimes uses plain words. But if this be a taint which requires expurgation, it would be desirable to begin by expurgating the morning and evening lessons. The delicate office which Mr. Croker has undertaken he has performed in the most capricious manner. One strong, old-fashioned, English word, familiar to all who read their Bibles, is changed for a softer synonyme in some passages, and suffered to stand unaltered in others. In one place a faint allusion made by Johnson to an indelicate subject, an allusion so faint that, till Mr. Croker's note pointed it out to us, we had never noticed it, and of which we are quite sure that the meaning would never be discovered by any of those for whose sake books are expurgated, is altogether omitted. In another place, a coarse and stupid jest of Dr. Taylor on the same subject, expressed in the broadest language, almost the only passage, as far as we remember, in all Boswell's book, which we should have been inclined to leave out, is suffered to remain.

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[1] AUTHOR'S FOOTNOTE.—IV. 377.

[2] *Ibid.*—IV. 415.

[3] *Ibid.*—II. 461.

We complain, however, much more of the additions than of the omissions. We have half of Mrs. Thrale's book, scraps of Mr. Tyers,[1] scraps of Mr. Murphy,[2] scraps of Mr. Cradock,[3] long prosings of Sir John Hawkins,[4] and connecting observations by Mr. Croker himself, inserted into the midst of Boswell's text. To this practice we most decidedly object. An editor might as well publish Thucydides with extracts from Diodorus interspersed, or incorporate the Lives of Suetonius with the History and Annals of Tacitus. Mr. Croker tells us, indeed, that he has done only what Boswell wished to do, and was prevented from doing by the law of copyright. We doubt this greatly. Boswell has studiously abstained from availing himself of the information given by his rivals, on many occasions on which he might have cited them without subjecting himself to the charge of piracy. Mr. Croker has himself, on one occasion, remarked very justly that Boswell was unwilling to owe any obligation to Hawkins. But, be this as it may, if Boswell had quoted from Sir John and from Mrs. Thrale, he would have been guided by his own taste and judgment in selecting his quotations. On what Boswell quoted he would have commented with perfect freedom; and the borrowed passages, so selected, and accompanied by such comments, would have become original. They would have dovetailed into the work. No hitch, no crease, would have been discernible. The whole would appear one and indivisible.

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[1] Thomas Tyers, 1726-1787, an author and a friend of Johnson. Johnson said that Tyers always told him something that he did not know before. Tyers published in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1785, "A Biographical Sketch of Dr. Johnson."

[2] Arthur Murphy, 1727-1805, was an actor, dramatist and miscellaneous writer of some note in his day. He was a friend of Johnson and of Samuel Rogers. He published in 1792 an *Essay on the Life and Genius of Samuel Johnson, LL.D.*

[3] Joseph Cradock, 1742-1826, an author who published in the year of his death a volume of *Literary and Miscellaneous Memoirs* containing recollections of Johnson.

[4] John Hawkins, Sir, 1719-1789, a lawyer and man of letters, whose principal work, a *History of Music*, was published in 1776. In early life he had contributed to the *Gentleman's Magazine* then edited by Cave, and thus made the acquaintance of Johnson. He was a member of the club formed by Johnson at the close of 1748 at the King's Head, Ivy Lane, and also of The Club established in 1763, but Johnson pronounced him "a most unclubbable man" and spoke very severely of his ill manners. Nevertheless he made Hawkins one of his executors and Hawkins published an edition of his works preceded by a *Life* in 1787-1789. The *Life*, though otherwise of little value and quite obscured by Boswell's narrative, has that value which must belong to every record of a great man by a contemporary and an old acquaintance.

"Ut per læve severos
Effundat junctura ungues."[1]

This is not the case with Mr. Croker's insertions. They are not chosen as Boswell would have chosen them. They are not introduced as Boswell would have introduced them. They differ from the quotations scattered through the original Life of Johnson, as a withered bough stuck in the ground differs from a tree skilfully transplanted with all its life about it.

Not only do these anecdotes disfigure Boswell's book; they are themselves disfigured by being inserted in his book. The charm of Mrs. Thrale's little volume is utterly destroyed.[2] The feminine quickness of observation, the feminine softness of heart, the colloquial incorrectness and vivacity of style, the little amusing airs of a half-learned lady, the delightful garrulity, the "dear Doctor Johnson," the "it was so comical," all disappear in Mr. Croker's quotations. The lady ceases to speak in the first person; and her anecdotes, in the process of transfusion, become as flat as Champagne in decanters, or Herodotus in Beloe's[3] version. Sir John Hawkins, it is true, loses nothing; and for the best of reasons. Sir John had nothing to lose.

The course which Mr. Croker ought to have taken is quite clear. He should have reprinted Boswell's narrative precisely as Boswell wrote it; and in the notes or the appendix he should have placed any anecdotes which he might have thought it advisable to quote from other writers. This would have been a much more convenient course for the reader, who has now constantly to keep his eye on the margin in order to see whether he is perusing Boswell, Mrs. Thrale, Murphy, Hawkins, Tyers, Cradock, or Mr. Croker. We greatly doubt whether even the Tour to the Hebrides ought to have been inserted in the midst of the Life. There is one marked distinction between the two works. Most of the Tour was seen by Johnson in manuscript. It does not appear that he ever saw any part of the Life.

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[1] Persius, satire i., line 64.

[2] The *Anecdotes*.

[3] William Beloe, 1756-1817, a clergyman, author of *The Sexagenarian*, translated several classical authors into English. His Herodotus has found some to praise it.

We love, we own, to read the great productions of the human mind as they were written. We have this feeling even about scientific treatises; though we know that the sciences are always in a state of progression, and that the alterations made by a modern editor in an old book on any branch of natural or political philosophy are likely to be improvements. Some errors have been detected by writers of this generation in the speculations of Adam Smith. A short cut has been made to much knowledge at which Sir Isaac Newton arrived through arduous and circuitous paths. Yet we still look with peculiar veneration on the Wealth of Nations and on the Principia, and should regret to see either of those great works garbled even by the ablest hands. But in works which owe much of their interest to the character and situation of the writers the case is infinitely stronger. What man of taste and feeling can endure *rifacimenti*, harmonies, abridgments, expurgated editions? Who ever reads a stage-copy of a play when he can procure the original? Who ever cut open Mrs. Siddons's Milton?[1] Who ever got through ten pages of Mr. Gilpin's translation of John Bunyan's Pilgrim into modern English?[2] Who would lose, in the confusion of a Diatessaron,[3] the peculiar charm which belongs to the narrative of the disciple whom Jesus loved? The feeling of a reader who has become intimate with any great original work is that which Adam expressed towards his bride:

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[1] In 1832 Murray published for Mrs. Siddons *The Story of our First Parents*, selected from Milton's *Paradise Lost*, for the use of young persons. It was a choice of readings which Mrs. Siddons had originally made for her own family, omitting all that did not immediately concern the fortunes of Adam and Eve.

[2] *A New and Corrected Edition of Bunyan's* Pilgrim's Progress *in which the Phraseology of the Author is somewhat Improved, some of His Obscurities Elucidated and some of His Redundancies done away.* By the Rev. J. Gilpin; published by F. Houlston & Son, 1811.

[3] A Harmony of the Gospels.

> "Should God create another Eve, and I
> Another rib afford, yet loss of thee
> Would never from my heart."[1]

No substitute, however exquisitely formed, will fill the void left by the original. The second beauty may be equal or superior to the first; but still it is not she.

The reasons which Mr. Croker has given for incorporating passages from Sir John Hawkins and Mrs. Thrale with the narrative of Boswell would vindicate the adulteration of half the classical works in the language. If Pepys's Diary[2] and Mrs. Hutchinson's Memoirs[3] had been published a hundred years ago, no human being can doubt that Mr. Hume would have made great use of those books in his History of England. But would it, on that account, be judicious in a writer of our own times to publish an edition of Hume's History of England, in which large extracts from Pepys and Mrs. Hutchinson should be incorporated with the original text? Surely not. Hume's history, be its faults what they may, is now one great entire work, the production of one vigorous mind, working on such materials as were within its reach. Additions made by another hand may supply a particular deficiency, but would grievously injure the general effect. With Boswell's book the case is stronger. There is scarcely, in the whole compass of literature, a book which bears interpolation so ill. We know no production of the human mind which has so much of what may be called the race, so much of the peculiar flavour of the soil from which it sprang. The work could never have been written if the writer had not been precisely what he was. His character is displayed in every page, and this display of character gives a delightful interest to many passages which have no other interest.

The Life of Johnson is assuredly a great, a very great work. Homer is not more decidedly the first of heroic poets, Shakspeare is not more decidedly the first of dramatists, Demosthenes is not more decidedly the first of orators, than Boswell is the first of biographers. He has no second. He has distanced all his competitors so decidedly that it is not worth while to place them. Eclipse is first, and the rest nowhere.

We are not sure that there is in the whole history of the human intellect so strange a phænomenon as this book. Many of the greatest men that ever lived have written biography. Boswell was one of the smallest men that ever lived, and he has beaten them all. He was, if we are to give any credit to his own account or to the united testimony of all who knew him, a man of the meanest and feeblest intellect. Johnson described him as a fellow who had missed his only chance of immortality by not having been alive when the Dunciad was written.[1] Beauclerk[2] used his name as a proverbial expression for a bore. He was the laughing-stock of the whole of that brilliant society which has owed to him the greater part of its fame. He was always laying himself at the feet of some eminent man, and begging to be spit upon and trampled upon. He was always earning some ridiculous nickname, and then "binding it as a crown unto him," not merely in metaphor, but literally. He exhibited himself, at the Shakspeare Jubilee, to all the crowd which filled Stratford-on-Avon, with a placard round his hat bearing the inscription of Corsica Boswell. In his Tour, he proclaimed to all the world that at Edinburgh he was known by the appellation of Paoli Boswell. Servile and impertinent, shallow and pedantic, a bigot and a sot, bloated with family pride, and eternally blustering about the dignity of a born gentleman, yet stooping to be a talebearer, an eavesdropper, a common butt in the taverns of London, so curious to know every body who was talked about, that, Tory and high Churchman as he was, he manœuvred, we have been told, for an introduction to Tom Paine, so vain of the most childish distinctions, that when he had been to court, he drove to the office where his book was printing without changing his clothes, and summoned all the printer's devils to admire his new ruffles and sword; such was this man, and such he was content and proud to be. Every thing which another man would have hidden, every thing the publication of which would have made another man hang himself, was matter of gay and clamorous exultation to his weak and diseased mind. What silly things he said, what bitter retorts he provoked, how at one place he was troubled with evil presentiments which came to nothing,[1] how at another place, on waking from a drunken doze, he read the prayerbook and took a hair of the dog that had bitten him,[2] how he went to see men hanged and came away maudlin,[3] how he added five hundred pounds to the fortune of one of his babies because she was not scared at Johnson's ugly face,[4] how he was frightened out of his wits at sea, and how the sailors quieted him as they would have quieted a child,[5] how tipsy he was at Lady Cork's one evening and how much his merriment annoyed the ladies,[6] how impertinent he was to the Duchess of Argyle and with what stately contempt she put down his impertinence,[7] how Colonel Macleod sneered to his face at his impudent obtrusiveness,[8] how his father and the very wife of his bosom laughed and fretted at his fooleries; all these things he proclaimed to all the world, as if they had been subjects for pride and ostentatious rejoicing. All the caprices of his temper, all the illusions of his vanity, all his hypochondriac whimsies, all his castles in the air, he displayed with a cool self-complacency, a perfect unconsciousness that he was making a fool of himself, to which it is impossible to find a parallel in the whole history of mankind. He has used many people ill; but assuredly he has used nobody so ill as himself.

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[1] *Paradise Lost*, bk. ix., lines 911-913.

[2] Pepys' *Diary* extends over the years 1660-1669, but it was not published until 1825.

[3] The *Memoirs of Colonel Hutchinson* by his widow were first published in 1806.

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[1] A free version of a remark which Lord Wellesley told Croker that Johnson had made when Boswell said how delightful it must have been to have lived with the Queen Anne wits. "Boswell is right; every man wishes for preferment, and had Boswell lived in those days he would have obtained promotion." Sir Joshua Reynolds: "How so, sir?" Johnson: "Sir, he would have had a high place in the *Dunciad*." Boswell mentions that Johnson was rude, but does not give the details (year 1788).

[2] Topham Beauclerk, 1739-1780, a grandson of the first Duke of St. Albans, a dissipated but clever and accomplished man who collected a valuable library and stood high in Johnson's regard.

That such a man should have written one of the best books in the world is strange enough. But this is not all. Many persons who have conducted themselves foolishly in active life, and whose conversation has indicated no superior powers of mind, have left us valuable works. Goldsmith was very justly described by one of his contemporaries as an inspired idiot,[9] and by another as a being

> "Who wrote like an angel, and talked like poor Poll." [10]

La Fontaine [11] was in society a mere simpleton. His blunders would not come in amiss among the stories of Hierocles.[1] But these men attained literary eminence in spite of their weaknesses. Boswell attained it by reason of his weaknesses. If he had not been a great fool, he would never have been a great writer. Without all the qualities which made him the jest and the torment of those among whom he lived, without the officiousness, the inquisitiveness, the effrontery, the toad-eating, the insensibility to all reproof, he never could have produced so excellent a book. He was a slave, proud of his servitude, a Paul Pry, convinced that his own curiosity and garrulity were virtues, an unsafe companion who never scrupled to repay the most liberal hospitality by the basest violation of confidence, a man without delicacy, without shame, without sense enough to know when he was hurting the feelings of others or when he was exposing himself to derision; and because he was all this, he has, in an important department of literature, immeasurably surpassed such writers as Tacitus, Clarendon, Alfieri, and his own idol Johnson.[2]

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[1] Boswell in the *Life* frequently notices his own morbid depression and groundless fears and forebodings.

[2] *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*, 26th September.

[3] See Boswell's letter to the *Public Advertiser*, quoted by Hill, ii., 93.

[4] *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*, 15th August.

[5] *Ibid.*, 3rd October. It was the laird of Coll, not the sailors, who soothed Boswell.

[6] Boswell, iv., 109 (year 1781); the hostess was then Miss Monckton.

[7] *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*. [8] *Ibid.*

[9] By Horace Walpole (Davies, *Life of Garrick*, ii., 151).

[10] "Here lies Molly Goldsmith, for shortness called Moll,
Who wrote like an angel and talked like poor Poll."
—GARRICK, Epitaph on Goldsmith.

[11] Jean de La Fontaine, 1621-1695, the author of the famous *Fables* and *Tales*, who, in careless good nature and self-indulgence, as well as in the simple elegance of his expression, strongly resembled Goldsmith.

Of the talents which ordinarily raise men to eminence as writers, Boswell had absolutely none. There is not in all his books a single remark of his own on literature, politics, religion, or society, which is not either commonplace or absurd. His dissertations on hereditary gentility,[3] on the slave-trade,[4] and on the entailing of landed estates,[5] may serve as examples. To say that these passages are sophistical would be to pay them an extravagant compliment. They have no pretence to argument, or even to meaning. He has reported innumerable observations made by himself in the course of conversation. Of those observations we do not remember one which is above the intellectual capacity of a boy of fifteen. He has printed many of his own letters, and in these letters he is always ranting or twaddling. Logic, eloquence, wit, taste, all those things which are generally considered as making a book valuable, were utterly wanting to him. He had, indeed, a quick observation and a retentive memory. These qualities, if he had been a man of sense and virtue, would scarcely of themselves have sufficed to make him conspicuous; but because he was a dunce, a parasite, and a coxcomb, they have made him immortal.

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[1] Hierocles, a distinguished Platonic philosopher of the fifth century A.D., was long credited with a collection of ludicrous tales now thought to be the work of some later and little-known author.

[2] Tacitus wrote the life of his father-in-law, Julius Agricola, the most distinguished of the Roman governors of Britain, in so brief a form as almost to forbid a comparison with the *Life of Johnson*. Clarendon and Alfieri wrote their own lives, a very different thing from writing the lives of others. Only in one of his *Lives of the Poets*, the "Life of Savage," did Johnson write about a man whom he knew thoroughly. Thus Macaulay's assertion hardly contains so much as appears at first sight.

[3] Boswell, i., 491-2.

[4] Boswell, iii., 205.

[5] *Ibid.*, ii., 414.

Those parts of his book which, considered abstractedly, are most utterly worthless, are delightful when we read them as illustrations of the character of the writer. Bad in themselves, they are good dramatically, like the nonsense of Justice Shallow, the clipped English of Dr. Caius, or the misplaced consonants of Fluellen. Of all confessors, Boswell is the most candid. Other men who have pretended to lay open their own hearts, Rousseau, for example, and Lord Byron, have evidently written with a constant view to effect, and are to be then most distrusted when they seem to be most sincere. There is scarcely any man who would not rather accuse himself of great crimes and of dark and tempestuous passions than proclaim all his little vanities and wild fancies. It would be easier to find a person who would avow actions like those of Cæsar Borgia or Danton, than one who would publish a daydream like those of Alnaschar and Malvolio. Those weaknesses which most men keep covered up in the most secret places of the mind, not to be disclosed to the eye of friendship or of love, were precisely the weaknesses which Boswell paraded before all the world. He was perfectly frank, because the weakness of his understanding and the tumult of his spirits prevented him from knowing when he made himself ridiculous. His book resembles nothing so much as the conversation of the inmates of the Palace of Truth.[1]

His fame is great; and it will, we have no doubt, be lasting; but it is fame of a peculiar kind, and indeed marvellously resembles infamy. We remember no other case in which the world has made so great a distinction between a book and its author. In general, the book and the author are considered as one. To admire the book is to admire the author. The case of Boswell is an exception, we think the only exception, to this rule. His work is universally allowed to be interesting, instructive, eminently original: yet it has brought him nothing but contempt. All the world reads it: all the world delights in it: yet we do not remember ever to have read or ever to have heard any expression of respect and admiration for the man to whom we owe so much instruction and amusement. While edition after edition of his book was coming forth, his son, as Mr. Croker tells us, was ashamed of it, and hated to hear it mentioned. This feeling was natural and reasonable. Sir Alexander saw that in proportion to the celebrity of the work, was the degradation of the author. The very editors of this unfortunate gentleman's books have forgotten their allegiance, and, like those Puritan casuists who took arms by the authority of the king against his person, have attacked the writer while doing homage to the writings. Mr. Croker, for example, has published two thousand five hundred notes on the life of Johnson, and yet scarcely ever mentions the biographer whose performance he has taken such pains to illustrate without some expression of contempt.

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[1] The Palace of Truth is the theme of a story by Madame de Genlis. Its inmates were under a charm which constrained them to speak truly. The story has been dramatised by W. S. Gilbert.

An ill-natured man Boswell certainly was not. Yet the malignity of the most malignant satirist could scarcely cut deeper than his thoughtless loquacity. Having himself no sensibility to derision and contempt, he took it for granted that all others were equally callous. He was not ashamed to exhibit himself to the whole world as a common spy, a common tattler, a humble companion without the excuse of poverty, and to tell a hundred stories of his own pertness and folly, and of the insults which his pertness and folly brought upon him. It was natural that he should show little discretion in cases in which the feelings or the honour of others might be concerned. No man, surely, ever published such stories respecting persons whom he professed to love and revere. He would infallibly have made his hero as contemptible as he has made himself, had not his hero really possessed some moral and intellectual qualities of a very high order. The best proof that Johnson was really an extraordinary man is that his character, instead of being degraded, has, on the whole, been decidedly raised by a work in which all his vices and weaknesses are exposed more unsparingly than they ever were exposed by Churchill[1] or by Kenrick.[2]

Johnson grown old, Johnson in the fulness of his fame and in the enjoyment of a competent fortune, is better known to us than any other man in history. Every thing about him, his coat, his wig, his figure, his face, his scrofula, his St. Vitus's dance, his rolling walk, his blinking eye, the outward signs which too clearly marked his approbation of his dinner, his insatiable appetite for fish-sauce and veal-pie with plums, his inextinguishable thirst for tea, his trick of touching the posts as he walked, his mysterious practice of treasuring up scraps of orange-peel, his morning slumbers, his midnight disputations, his contortions, his mutterings, his gruntings, his puffings, his vigorous, acute, and ready eloquence, his sarcastic wit, his vehemence, his insolence, his fits of tempestuous rage, his queer inmates, old Mr. Levett and blind Mrs. Williams, the cat Hodge and the negro Frank, all are as familiar to us as the objects by which we have been surrounded from childhood. But we have no minute information respecting those years of Johnson's life during which his character and his manners became immutably fixed. We know him, not as he was known to the men of his own generation, but as he was known to men whose father he might have been. That celebrated club of which he was the most distinguished member contained few persons who could remember a time when his fame was not fully established and his habits completely formed. He had made himself a name in literature while Reynolds and the Wartons were still boys.[1] He was about twenty years older than Burke, Goldsmith, and Gerard Hamilton, about thirty years older than Gibbon, Beauclerk, and Langton, and about forty years older than Lord Stowell, Sir William Jones, and Windham. Boswell and Mrs. Thrale, the two writers from whom we derive most of our knowledge respecting him, never saw him till long after he was fifty years old, till most of his great works had become classical, and till the pension bestowed on him by the Crown had placed him above poverty. Of those eminent men who were his most intimate associates towards the close of his life, the only one, as far as we remember, who knew him during the first ten or twelve years of his residence in the capital, was David Garrick; and it does not appear that, during those years, David Garrick saw much of his fellow-townsman.

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[1] Charles Churchill, 1731-1764, the celebrated satirical poet, author of the *Rosciad, Prophecy of Famine, Duellist*, etc., disliked Johnson for his political opinions, and ridiculed him in *The Ghost.*

[2] William Kenrick, 1725-1779, a miscellaneous writer and libeller, attacked Johnson in a review of Dr. Johnson's new edition of Shakspeare and in an *Epistle to J. Boswell, Esq.*

Johnson came up to London precisely at the time when the condition of a man of letters was most miserable and degraded. It was a dark night between two sunny days. The age of patronage had passed away. The age of general curiosity and intelligence had not arrived. The number of readers is at present so great that a popular author may subsist in comfort and opulence on the profits of his works. In the reigns of William the Third, of Anne, and of George the First, even such men as Congreve and Addison would scarcely have been able to live like gentlemen by the mere sale of their writings. But the deficiency of the natural demand for literature was, at the close of the seventeenth and at the beginning of the eighteenth century, more than made up by artificial encouragement, by a vast system of bounties and premiums. There was, perhaps, never a time at which the rewards of literary merit were so splendid, at which men who could write well found such easy admittance into the most distinguished society, and to the highest honours of the state. The chiefs of both the great parties into which the kingdom was divided patronised literature with emulous munificence. Congreve, when he had scarcely attained his majority, was rewarded for his first comedy with places which made him independent for life.[1] Smith,[2] though his Hippolytus and Phædra failed, would have been consoled with three hundred a year but for his own folly. Rowe[3] was not only Poet Laureate, but also land-surveyor of the customs in the port of London, clerk of the council to the Prince of Wales, and secretary of the Presentations to the Lord Chancellor. Hughes[4] was secretary to the Commissions of the Peace. Ambrose Philips[5] was judge of the Prerogative Court in Ireland. Locke was Commissioner of Appeals and of the Board of Trade.[6] Newton was Master of the Mint.[7] Stepney[8] and Prior[9] were employed in embassies of high dignity and importance. Gay, who commenced life as apprentice to a silk mercer,[1] became a secretary of legation at five-and-twenty. It was to a poem on the Death of Charles the Second, and to the City and Country Mouse,[2] that Montague owed his introduction into public life, his earldom, his garter, and his Auditorship of the Exchequer. Swift, but for the unconquerable prejudice of the queen,[3] would have been a bishop. Oxford, with his white staff in his hand, passed through the crowd of his suitors to welcome Parnell,[4] when that ingenious writer deserted the Whigs. Steele was a commissioner of stamps and a member of Parliament. Arthur Mainwaring[5] was a commissioner of the customs, and auditor of the imprest.[6] Tickell was secretary to the Lords Justices of Ireland.[7] Addison was secretary of state.[8]

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[1] Johnson was born in 1709 and had made a reputation by his *London* published in 1738. Reynolds was born in 1723; Joseph Warton, afterwards distinguished as a critic and minor poet, in 1722, and his brother, Thomas Warton, author of the *History of English Poetry*, in 1728.

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[1] See essay on comic dramatists of the Restoration.

[2] Edmund Smith, 1672-1710, was a minor poet. Addison wrote the prologue and Prior the epilogue to the *Phædra* and *Hippolytus*, but the public would none of it. Smith dedicated it to Lord Halifax (Charles Montague), but, neglecting to present the dedication in person, lost his patronage.

[3] Nicholas Rowe, 1674-1718, once ranked high as a dramatist. He wrote amongst other plays "The Fair Penitent" and "Lady Jane Grey" and published an edition of Shakspeare. He was a staunch Whig.

[4] John Hughes, 1677-1720, is now remembered only for his "Siege of Damascus," a tragedy which was once much admired.

[5] Ambrose Philips, 1675-1749, the author of *Pastorals* and of a once famous play, "The Distressed Mother," has escaped oblivion chiefly through Pope's hatred and because his name and verse suggested the term "namby-pamby."

[6] Locke became Commissioner of Appeals in 1689 and a member of the Board of Trade in 1696.

[7] Newton was appointed Warden of the Mint in 1696 and Master of the Mint in 1699.

[8] George Stepney, 1663-1707, a good linguist and letter-writer, but poor poet, was a friend of Charles Montague. He was sent as Envoy to the Elector of Brandenburg, the Emperor, the Elector of Saxony, etc.

[9] Matthew Prior, 1664-1721, at one time assistant to a vintner, attracted the notice of the Earl of Dorset and became the college friend of Charles Montague.

This liberal patronage was brought into fashion, as it seems, by the magnificent Dorset,[9] almost the only noble versifier in the court of Charles the Second who possessed talents for composi-

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After acting as secretary to various ambassadors he was made a Commissioner of Trade and Plantations and subsequently a Commissioner of the Board of Trade and was employed in the negotiations which led up to the Treaty of Utrecht.

[1] John Gay, 1685-1732, soon quitted the mercer's shop for literature and published *Rural Sports* and the *Shepherd's Week*. A Tory himself, he was appointed by the Tory ministers secretary to Lord Clarendon who went to Hanover in 1714 as Envoy-Extraordinary.

[2] Prior is said to have had the largest part in this poem. It first brought Montague into notice, but his after rise was the result of his political and financial ability.

[3] A prejudice is said to have been occasioned by the *Tale of a Tub* which the Queen thought profane.

[4] Thomas Parnell, 1679-1718, was born in Dublin of Whig parents. He took orders and in 1711 joined the Tories, but kept his Whig friends and contributed to the *Spectator* and *Guardian*. His poems were not published until 1721; his posthumous works not until 1758.

[5] Arthur Mainwaring, 1668-1712, began life as a Tory and wrote a satire on William and Mary, entitled *Tarquin and Tullia;* but, having been introduced to Somers, changed his politics and got preferment.

[6] The auditors of imprest, or of money issued for public use, were first appointed in Elizabeth's reign. They were paid by fees, so that their emoluments were always increasing, whilst they came to entrust their duty to deputies. When the office was abolished in 1785, it was one of the richest sinecures in the gift of the Crown.

[7] See essay on Addison.

[8] See essay on Addison for Addison's political career.

[9] Charles Sackville, sixth Earl of Dorset and Earl of Middlesex, 1638-1706, was among the foremost men of pleasure and of taste in the court of Charles II. He wrote one or two short poems which were truly poetic. Although a sturdy Whig, he showed himself the friend of genius without regard to party, as when he came to Dryden's assistance after the Revolution. But the patronage of men of letters by statesmen was due, not so much to the example set by Dorset, as to the necessity, felt by both parties in a period of revolution, for employing every means to influence the judgment of the people.

tion which were independent of the aid of a coronet. Montague owed his elevation to the favour of Dorset, and imitated through the whole course of his life the liberality to which he was himself so greatly indebted. The Tory leaders, Harley and Bolingbroke in particular, vied with the chiefs of the Whig party in zeal for the encouragement of letters. But soon after the accession of the house of Hanover a change took place. The supreme power passed to a man who cared little for poetry or eloquence.[1] The importance of the House of Commons was constantly on the increase. The government was under the necessity of bartering for Parliamentary support much of that patronage which had been employed in fostering literary merit; and Walpole was by no means inclined to divert any part of the fund of corruption to purposes which he considered as idle. He had eminent talents for government and for debate. But he had paid little attention to books, and felt little respect for authors. One of the coarse jokes of his friend, Sir Charles Hanbury Williams,[2] was far more pleasing to him than Thomson's Seasons or Richardson's Pamela. He had observed that some of the distinguished writers whom the favour of Halifax had turned into statesmen had been mere incumbrances to their party, dawdlers in office, and mutes in Parliament. During the whole course of his administration, therefore, he scarcely befriended a single man of genius. The best writers of the age gave all their support to the opposition, and contributed to excite that discontent which, after plunging the nation into a foolish and unjust war, overthrew the minister to make room for men less able and equally immoral. The opposition could reward its eulogists with little more than promises and caresses. St. James's would give nothing: Leicester House[3] had nothing to give.

Thus, at the time when Johnson commenced his literary career, a writer had little to hope from the patronage of powerful individuals. The patronage of the public did not yet furnish the means of comfortable subsistence. The prices paid by booksellers to authors were so low that a man of considerable talents and unremitting industry could do little more than provide for the day which was passing over him. The lean kine had eaten up the fat kine. The thin and withered ears had devoured the good ears. The season of rich harvests was over, and the period of famine had begun. All that is squalid and miserable might now be summed up in the word Poet. That word denoted a creature dressed like a scarecrow, familiar with compters and spunging-houses, and perfectly qualified to decide on the comparative merits of the Common Side in the King's Bench prison and of Mount Scoundrel in the Fleet.[1] Even the poorest pitied him; and they well might pity him. For if their condition was equally abject, their aspirings were not equally high, nor their sense of insult equally acute. To lodge in a garret up four pair of stairs, to dine in a cellar among footmen out of place, to translate ten hours a day for the wages of a ditcher, to be hunted by bailiffs from one haunt of beggary and pestilence to another, from Grub Street[2] to St. George's Fields, and from St. George's Fields to the alleys behind St. Martin's church, to sleep on a bulk in June and amidst the ashes of a glass-house in December, to die in an hospital and to be buried in a parish vault, was the fate of more than one writer who, if he had lived thirty years earlier, would have been admitted to the sittings of the Kitcat or the Scriblerus club,[3] would have sat in Parliament, and would have been entrusted with embassies to the High Allies; who, if he had lived in our time, would have found encouragement scarcely less munificent in Albemarle Street or in Paternoster Row.

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[1] Sir Robert Walpole.

[2] Charles Hanbury Williams, 1708-1759, a political supporter of Walpole and a diplomatist of some reputation, wrote satires, lampoons and occasional verses, sometimes clever and often indelicate.

[3] The residence of Frederick, Prince of Wales.

As every climate has its peculiar diseases, so every walk of life has its peculiar temptations. The literary character, assuredly, has always had its share of faults, vanity, jealousy, morbid sensibility. To these faults were now superadded the faults which are commonly found in men whose livelihood is precarious, and whose principles are exposed to the trial of severe distress. All the vices of the gambler and of the beggar were blended with those of the author. The prizes in the wretched lottery of book-making were scarcely less ruinous than the blanks. If good fortune came, it came in such a manner that it was almost certain to be abused. After months of starvation and despair, a full third night[1] or a well-received dedication filled the pocket of the lean, ragged, unwashed poet with guineas. He hastened to enjoy those luxuries with the images of which his mind had been haunted while he was sleeping amidst the cinders and eating potatoes at the Irish ordinary in Shoe Lane. A week of taverns soon qualified him for another year of night-cellars. Such was the life of Savage,[2] of Boyse,[3] and of a crowd of others. Sometimes blazing in gold-laced hats and waistcoats; sometimes lying in bed because their coats had gone to pieces, or wearing paper cravats because their linen was in pawn; sometimes drinking Champagne and Tokay with Betty Careless;[4] sometimes standing at the window of an eating-house in Porridge island,[5] to snuff up the scent of what they could not afford to taste; they knew luxury; they knew beggary; but they never knew comfort. These men were irreclaimable. They looked on a regular and frugal life with the same aversion which an old gipsy or a Mohawk hunter feels for a stationary abode, and for the restraints and securities of civilised communities. They were as untameable, as much wedded to their desolate freedom, as the wild ass. They could no more be broken in to the offices of social man than the unicorn could be trained to serve and abide by the crib. It was well if they did not, like beasts of a still fiercer race, tear the hands which ministered to their necessities. To assist them was impossible; and the most benevolent of mankind at length became weary of giving relief which was dissipated with the wildest profusion as soon as it had been received. If a sum was bestowed on the wretched adventurer, such as, properly husbanded, might have supplied him for six months, it was instantly spent in strange freaks of sensuality, and, before forty-eight hours had elapsed, the poet was again pestering all his acquaintance for twopence to get a plate of shin of beef at a subterraneous cook-shop. If his friends gave him an asylum in their houses, those houses were forthwith turned into bagnios and taverns. All order was destroyed; all business was suspended. The most good-natured host began to repent of his eagerness to serve a man of genius in distress when he heard his guest roaring for fresh punch at five o'clock in the morning.

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[1] Many debtors were confined in the King's Bench Prison in Southwark and the Fleet Prison on the east side of Farringdon Street. Common Side in the King's Bench was for those who could not afford the expense of separate apartments. Mount Scoundrel was the most undesirable part of the Fleet.

[2] Grub Street, Cripplegate, was renamed in 1830 Milton Street. "Grub Street, the name of a street in London much inhabited by writers of small histories, dictionaries and temporary poems; whence any mean production is called Grub Street" (Johnson, *Dictionary*). Andrew Marvell was the first writer to apply the name to worthless literature. Pope and Swift made the application classical.

[3] The Kit Cat (or Kit Kat) Club was a society of Whig authors and statesmen formed in the year 1700. It is said to have been called after Christopher Katt, a pastry-cook and landlord of the house where they dined. Every year they elected a lady as their toast and wrote her name with a diamond on a glass, adding some complimentary verses. Lady Mary Montague was named by her father for this honour when not yet eight years old. The Scriblerus Club was a Tory society of much the same kind. Swift, Arbuthnot and Pope were its chief literary members; Harley and St. John were the foremost of its statesmen.

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[1] In the eighteenth century it was usual for the playwright to receive the profits of the third night's performance which often were his chief reward. So Pope writes:—

> "Till genial Jacob or a warm third day
> Call forth each mass, a poem or a play."
> —*Dunciad*, i., lines 57, 58.

[2] Richard Savage who died in 1743 was a poet of some ability, but incurably spendthrift and dissolute, whose acquaintance Johnson made on coming to town and with whom he formed a close friendship. To this accident Savage owes his escape from oblivion as Johnson gave him a space in the *Lives of the Poets* out of all proportion to his merit, and told his mournful story with real force and pathos.

[3] Samuel Boyse, 1708-1749, a poetical native of Dublin, tried his fortune first in Edinburgh and then in London, but gradually sank into the direst beggary, having at one time to keep his bed from sheer want of clothes.

[4] A famous courtezan referred to in Hogarth's "Rake's Progress," plate viii., "Scene in a Madhouse," where one of the lunatics has written on the handrail of the staircase "Charming Betty Careless." In the description of Hogarth's "Marriage à la Mode," plate iii., she is said to have died in Covent Garden Workhouse in 1752.

[5] Porridge Island is a mean street in London filled with cook-shops for the convenience of the poorer inhabitants; the real name of it I know not, but suspect that it is generally known to have been originally a term of derision (Mrs. Piozzi, *Anecdotes*, p. 103). It was near St. Martin's in the Fields.

A few eminent writers were more fortunate. Pope had been raised above poverty by the active patronage which, in his youth, both the great political parties had extended to his Homer. Young[1] had received the only pension ever bestowed, to the best of our recollection, by Sir Robert Walpole, as the reward of mere literary merit. One or two of the many poets who attached themselves to the opposition, Thomson[2] in particular and Mallet,[3] obtained, after much severe suffering, the means of subsistence from their political friends. Richardson,[4] like a man of sense, kept his shop; and his shop kept him, which his novels, admirable as they are, would scarcely have done. But nothing could be more deplorable than the state even of the ablest men, who at that time depended for subsistence on their writings. Johnson, Collins, Fielding, and Thomson, were certainly four of the most distinguished persons that England produced during the eighteenth century. It is well known that they were all four arrested for debt.

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[1] Edward Young, 1681-1765, author of the *Love of Fame; or The Universal Passion* and *Night Thoughts*, once highly renowned as a poet, now almost utterly neglected, received from Walpole in 1726 a pension of £200 a year.

[2] James Thomson, 1700-1748, published his best work, *The Seasons*, between 1726 and 1730. In 1733 the Chancellor gave him the sinecure post of Secretary of Briefs, worth £300 a year.

[3] David Mallet, originally Malloch, 1705 ? -1765, a friend of Thomson, author of the ballad of "William and Margaret," and joint author with Thomson of "The Masque of Alfred" in which "Rule Britannia" was first given to the public. He undertook, but never wrote, the life of Marlborough, and became the literary executor of Bolingbroke. He was appointed Under-Secretary to the Prince of Wales in 1742, and in 1763 was given a sinecure place by Lord Bute.

[4] Richardson was a printer.

Into calamities and difficulties such as these Johnson plunged in his twenty-eighth year. From that time, till he was three or four and fifty, we have little information respecting him; little, we mean, compared with the full and accurate information which we possess respecting his proceedings and habits towards the close of his life. He emerged at length from cock-lofts and sixpenny ordinaries into the society of the polished and the opulent. His fame was established. A pension sufficient for his wants had been conferred on him:[1] and he came forth to astonish a generation with which he had almost as little in common as with Frenchmen or Spaniards.

In his early years he had occasionally seen the great; but he had seen them as a beggar. He now came among them as a companion. The demand for amusement and instruction had, during the course of twenty years, been gradually increasing. The price of literary labour had risen; and those rising men of letters with whom Johnson was henceforth to associate, were for the most part persons widely different from those who had walked about with him all night in the streets for want of a lodging. Burke, Robertson, the Wartons, Gray, Mason, Gibbon, Adam Smith, Beattie, Sir William Jones, Goldsmith, and Churchill, were the most distinguished writers of what may be called the second generation of the Johnsonian age. Of these men Churchill was the only one in whom we can trace the stronger lineaments of that character which, when Johnson first came up to London, was common among authors. Of the rest, scarcely any had felt the pressure of severe poverty. Almost all had been early admitted into the most respectable society on an equal footing. They were men of quite a different species from the dependents of Curll[2] and Osborne.[3]

Johnson came among them the solitary specimen of a past age, the last survivor of the genuine race of Grub Street hacks; the last of that generation of authors whose abject misery and whose dissolute manners had furnished inexhaustible matter to the satirical genius of Pope. From nature he had received an uncouth figure, a diseased constitution, and an irritable temper. The manner in which the earlier years of his manhood had been passed had given to his demeanour, and even to his moral character, some peculiarities appalling to the civilised beings who were the companions of his old age. The perverse irregularity of his hours, the slovenliness of his person, his fits of strenuous exertion, interrupted by long intervals of sluggishness, his strange abstinence, and his equally strange voracity, his active benevolence, contrasted with the constant rudeness and the occasional ferocity of his manners in society, made him, in the opinion of those with whom he lived during the last twenty years of his life, a complete original. An original he was undoubtedly, in some respects. But if we possessed full information concerning those who shared his early hardships, we should probably find that what we call his singularities of manner were, for the most part, failings which he had in common with the class to which he belonged. He ate at Streatham Park[1] as he had been used to eat behind the screen at St. John's Gate, when he was ashamed to show his ragged clothes. He ate as it was natural that a man should eat, who, during a great part of his life, had passed the morning in doubt whether he should have food for the afternoon. The habits of his early life had accustomed him to bear privation with fortitude, but not to taste pleasure with moderation. He could fast; but, when he did not fast, he tore his dinner like a famished wolf, with the veins swelling on his forehead, and the perspiration running down his cheeks. He scarcely ever took wine. But when he drank it, he drank it greedily and in large tumblers. These were, in fact, mitigated symptoms of that same moral disease which raged with such deadly malignity in his friends Savage and Boyse. The roughness and violence which he showed in society were to be expected from a man whose temper, not naturally gentle, had been long tried by the bitterest calamities, by the want of meat, of fire, and of clothes, by the importunity of creditors, by the insolence of booksellers, by the derision of fools, by the insincerity of patrons, by that bread which is the bitterest of all food, by those stairs which are the most toilsome of all paths, by that deferred hope which makes the heart sick.[1] Through all these things the ill-dressed, coarse, ungainly pedant had struggled manfully up to eminence and command. It was natural that, in the exercise of his power, he should be "eo immitior, quia toleraverat,"[2] that, though his heart was undoubtedly generous and humane, his demeanour in society should be harsh and despotic. For severe distress he had sympathy, and not only sympathy, but munificent relief. But for the suffering which a harsh word inflicts upon a delicate mind he had no pity; for it was a kind of suffering which he could scarcely conceive. He would carry home on his shoulders a sick and starving girl from the streets.[3] He turned his house into a place of refuge for a crowd of wretched old creatures who could find no other asylum; nor could all their peevishness and ingratitude weary out his benevolence. But the pangs of wounded vanity seemed to him ridiculous; and he scarcely felt sufficient compassion even for the pangs of wounded affection. He had seen and felt so much of sharp misery, that he was not affected by paltry vexations; and he seemed to think that every body ought to be as much hardened to those vexations as himself. He was angry with Boswell for complaining of a head-ache,[4] with Mrs. Thrale for grumbling about the dust on the road, or the smell of the kitchen.[5] These were, in his phrase, "foppish lamentations," which people ought to be ashamed to utter in a world so full of sin and sorrow. Goldsmith crying because the Good-natured Man had failed, inspired him with no pity.[6] Though his own health was not good, he detested and despised valetudinarians. Pecuniary losses, unless they reduced the loser absolutely to beggary, moved him very little. People whose hearts had been softened by prosperity might weep, he said, for such events; but all that could be expected of a plain man was not to laugh. He was not much moved even by the spectacle of Lady Tavistock[1] dying of a broken heart for the loss of her lord. Such grief he considered as a luxury reserved for the idle and the wealthy. A washerwoman, left a widow with nine small children, would not have sobbed herself to death.

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[1] In 1762 Lord Bute, then Prime Minister, gave Johnson a pension of £300 a year.

[2] Edmund Curll, 1675-1747, a disreputable bookseller, famous as the personal enemy of Pope.

[3] Thomas Osborne died in 1767, a prosperous bookseller who purchased the library of the Earl of Oxford, quarrelled with Pope and was ridiculed in the *Dunciad.* Johnson pronounced him "a man entirely destitute of shame, without any sense of disgrace but that of poverty." He had been uncivil to Johnson, who knocked him down with a folio.

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[1] Streatham Park was Mr. Thrale's suburban house. Cave, the bookseller, who published the *Gentleman's Magazine* and employed Johnson in early years, lived at St. John's Gate, Clerkenwell. There Johnson sometimes dined behind a screen, because his clothes were so shabby that he was loath to show himself.

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[1] Compare a passage in the essay on Machiavelli, p. 107.

[2] Tacitus thus describes a Roman officer who, having risen from the ranks, proved the severest of disciplinarians (*Annals*, bk. i., ch. xx.).

[3] Boswell, iv., 321.

[4] Once when Boswell was dwelling on the evenings which they had spent together, and the consequent headaches, Johnson said: "Nay, sir, it was not the wine that made your head ache, but the sense that I put into it" (Boswell, iii., 381). But Macaulay was probably thinking of Johnson's remark to William Scott, afterwards Lord Stowell, "At your age, sir, I had no headache."

[5] "After a very long summer, particularly hot and dry, I was wishing naturally but thoughtlessly for some rain to lay the dust, as we drove along the Surrey roads. 'I cannot bear,' he replied with much asperity and an altered look, 'when I know how many poor families will perish next winter for want of that bread which the present drought will deny them, to hear ladies sighing for rain, only that their complexions may not suffer from the heat or their clothes be incommoded by the dust—for shame, leave off such foppish complaints and study to relieve those whose distresses are real'" (Mrs. Piozzi, *Anecdotes*, p. 104).

[6] Mrs. Piozzi, *Anecdotes*, p. 246. But Macaulay's inference from her recollections is not altogether fair.

A person who troubled himself so little about small or sentimental grievances was not likely to be very attentive to the feelings of others in the ordinary intercourse of society. He could not understand how a sarcasm or a reprimand could make any man really unhappy. "My dear doctor," said he to Goldsmith, "what harm does it do to a man to call him Holofernes?"[2] "Pooh, ma'am," he exclaimed to Mrs. Carter, "who is the worse for being talked of uncharitably?"[3] Politeness has been well defined as benevolence in small things. Johnson was impolite, not because he wanted benevolence, but because small things appeared smaller to him than to people who had never known what it was to live for fourpence halfpenny a day.

The characteristic peculiarity of his intellect was the union of great powers with low prejudices. If we judged of him by the best parts of his mind, we should place him almost as high as he was placed by the idolatry of Boswell; if by the worst parts of his mind, we should place him even below Boswell himself. Where he was not under the influence of some strange scruple, or some domineering passion, which prevented him from boldly and fairly investigating a subject, he was a wary and acute reasoner, a little too much inclined to scepticism, and a little too fond of paradox. No man was less likely to be imposed upon by fallacies in argument, or by exaggerated statements of fact. But if, while he was beating down sophisms and exposing false testimony, some childish prejudices, such as would excite laughter in a well managed nursery, came across him, he was smitten as if by enchantment. His mind dwindled away under the spell from gigantic elevation to dwarfish littleness. Those who had lately been admiring its amplitude and its force were now as much astonished at its strange narrowness and feebleness as the fisherman in the Arabian tale, when he saw the Genie, whose stature had overshadowed the whole sea-coast, and whose might seemed equal to a contest with armies, contract himself to the dimensions of his small prison, and lie there the helpless slave of the charm of Solomon.

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[1] The lady here meant was the widow of Francis, Marquess of Tavistock, eldest son of the fourth Duke of Bedford, so bitterly reviled by Junius. The marquess died in 1767.

[2] "When the newspapers had tacked them together as the pedant and his flatterer in 'Love's Labour's Lost,' Dr. Goldsmith came to his friend, fretting and foaming and vowing vengeance against the printer, etc., but Mr. Johnson, tired of the bustle and desirous to think of something else, cried out at last, 'Why, what would'st thou have, dear doctor? who the plague is hurt with this nonsense? and how is a man the worse, I wonder, in his health, purse or character, for being called Holofernes?' 'I do not know,' replies the other, 'how you may relish being called Holofernes, but I do not like at least to play Goodman Dull'" (Mrs. Piozzi, *Anecdotes*, p. 180).

[3] "One of the company mentioned Mr. Thomas Hollis, the strenuous Whig who used to send over Europe presents of democratical books with their boards stamped with daggers and caps of liberty. Mrs. Carter said, 'He was a bad man. He used to talk uncharitably.' Johnson, 'Poh! Poh! Madam, who is the worse for being talked of uncharitably? Besides he was a dull, poor creature as ever lived'" (Boswell, iv., 97, year 1781).

Johnson was in the habit of sifting with extreme severity the evidence for all stories which were merely odd. But when they were not only odd but miraculous, his severity relaxed. He began to be credulous precisely at the point where the most credulous people begin to be sceptical. It is curious to observe, both in his writings and in his conversation, the contrast between the disdainful manner in which he rejects unauthenticated anecdotes, even when they are consistent with the general laws of nature, and the respectful manner in which he mentions the wildest stories relating to the invisible world. A man who told him of a water-spout, or a meteoric stone, generally had the lie direct given him for his pains. A man who told him of a prediction or a dream wonderfully accomplished was sure of a courteous hearing. "Johnson," observed Hogarth, "like King David, says in his haste that all men are liars."[1] "His incredulity," says Mrs. Thrale, "amounted almost to disease."[2] She tells us how he browbeat a gentleman, who gave him an account of a hurricane in the West Indies, and a poor quaker who related some strange circumstance about the red-hot balls fired at the siege of Gibraltar. "It is not so. It cannot be true. Don't tell that story again. You cannot think how poor a figure you make in telling it."[3] He once said, half jestingly, we suppose, that for six months he refused to credit the fact of the earthquake at Lisbon, and that he still believed the extent of the calamity to be greatly exaggerated. Yet he related with a grave face how old Mr. Cave of St. John's Gate saw a ghost, and how this ghost was something of a shadowy being.[1] He went himself on a ghost-hunt to Cock Lane, and was angry with John Wesley for not following up another scent of the same kind with proper spirit and perseverance.[2] He rejects the Celtic genealogies and poems without the least hesitation;[3] yet he declares himself willing to believe the stories of the second sight. If he had examined the claims of the Highland seers with half the severity with which he sifted the evidence for the genuineness of Fingal, he would, we suspect, have come away from Scotland with a mind fully made up. In his Lives of the Poets, we find that he is unwilling to give credit to the accounts of Lord Roscommon's early proficiency in his studies:[4] but he tells with great solemnity an absurd romance about some intelligence preternaturally impressed on the mind of that nobleman. He avows himself to be in great doubt about the truth of the story, and ends by warning his readers not wholly to slight such impressions.

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[1] Mrs. Piozzi, *Anecdotes*, p. 137.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 138, 140.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 141.

Many of his sentiments on religious subjects are worthy of a liberal and enlarged mind. He could discern clearly enough the folly and meanness of all bigotry except his own. When he spoke of the scruples of the Puritans, he spoke like a person who had really obtained an insight into the divine philosophy of the New Testament, and who considered Christianity as a noble scheme of government, tending to promote the happiness and to elevate the moral nature of man. The horror which the sectaries felt for cards, Christmas ale, plum-porridge, mince-pies, and dancing bears, excited his contempt. To the arguments urged by some very worthy people against showy dress he replied with admirable sense and spirit, "Let us not be found, when our Master calls us, stripping the lace off our waistcoats, but the spirit of contention from our souls and tongues. Alas! sir, a man who cannot get to heaven in a green coat will not find his way thither the sooner in a grey one."[5] Yet he was himself under the tyranny of scruples as unreasonable as those of Hudibras or Ralpho,[6] and carried his zeal for ceremonies and for ecclesiastical dignities to lengths altogether inconsistent with reason or with Christian charity. He has gravely noted down in his diary that he once committed the sin of drinking coffee on Good Friday.[1] In Scotland, he thought it his duty to pass several months without joining in public worship, solely because the ministers of the Kirk had not been ordained by bishops.[2] His mode of estimating the piety of his neighbours was somewhat singular. "Campbell," said he, "is a good man, a pious man. I am afraid he has not been in the inside of a church for many years: but he never passes a church without pulling off his hat; this shows he has good principles."[3] Spain and Sicily must surely contain many pious robbers and well-principled assassins. Johnson could easily see that a roundhead who named all his children after Solomon's singers, and talked in the House of Commons about seeking the Lord, might be an unprincipled villain, whose religious mummeries only aggravated his guilt. But a man who took off his hat when he passed a church episcopally consecrated must be a good man, a pious man, a man of good principles. Johnson could easily see that those persons who looked on a dance or a laced waistcoat as sinful, deemed most ignobly of the attributes of God and of the ends of revelation. But with what a storm of invective he would have overwhelmed any man who had blamed him for celebrating the redemption of mankind with sugarless tea and butterless buns.

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[1] Boswell, ii., 178 (year 1772).

[2] *Ibid.*, i., 406-408 (year 1763). The reference to Wesley is misleading. Johnson blamed Wesley for believing in the ghost without sufficient evidence (*ibid.*, iii., 297, year 1778).

[3] Johnson repeatedly expressed his utter disbelief in the poems of Ossian.

[4] "Life of Roscommon."

[5] Mrs. Piozzi, *Anecdotes*, p. 109.

[6] In Samuel Butler's mock-heroic poem aimed at the Puritans, the hero, Hudibras, is the Don Quixote of bigotry and hypocrisy. Ralpho is his squire.

Nobody spoke more contemptuously of the cant of patriotism. Nobody saw more clearly the error of those who regarded liberty, not as a means, but as an end, and who proposed to themselves, as the object of their pursuit, the prosperity of the state as distinct from the prosperity of the individuals who compose the state. His calm and settled opinion seems to have been that forms of government have little or no influence on the happiness of society. This opinion, erroneous as it is, ought at least to have preserved him from all intemperance on political questions. It did not, however, preserve him from the lowest, fiercest, and most absurd extravagances of party spirit, from rants which, in every thing but the diction, resembled those of Squire Western. He was, as a politician, half ice and half fire. On the side of his intellect he was a mere Pococurante, far too apathetic about public affairs, far too sceptical as to the good or evil tendency of any form of polity. His passions, on the contrary, were violent even to slaying against all who leaned to Whiggish principles. The well-known lines which he inserted in Goldsmith's Traveller express what seems to have been his deliberate judgment:

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[1] On that day he usually drank tea without milk according to Boswell, because milk might be considered animal food.

[2] "He refused to go and hear Principal Robertson preach. 'I will hear him (said he) if he will get up into a tree and preach; but I will not give a sanction by my presence to a Presbyterian assembly'" (Boswell, *Tour to the Hebrides*, 27th August, 1773).

[3] Boswell, i., 417 (year 1763).

> "How small, of all that human hearts endure,
> That part which kings or laws can cause or cure!"

He had previously put expressions very similar into the mouth of Rasselas.[1] It is amusing to contrast these passages with the torrents of raving abuse which he poured forth against the Long Parliament and the American Congress. In one of the conversations reported by Boswell this inconsistency displays itself in the most ludicrous manner.

"Sir Adam Ferguson," says Boswell, "suggested that luxury corrupts a people, and destroys the spirit of liberty. JOHNSON: 'Sir, that is all visionary. I would not give half a guinea to live under one form of government rather than another. It is of no moment to the happiness of an individual. Sir, the danger of the abuse of power is nothing to a private man. What Frenchman is prevented passing his life as he pleases?' SIR ADAM: 'But, sir, in the British constitution it is surely of importance to keep up a spirit in the people, so as to preserve a balance against the crown.' JOHNSON: 'Sir, I perceive you are a vile Whig. Why all this childish jealousy of the power of the crown? The crown has not power enough.'"[2]

One of the old philosophers, Lord Bacon tells us, used to say that life and death were just the same to him. "Why then," said an objector, "do you not kill yourself?" The philosopher answered, "Because it is just the same."[1] If the difference between two forms of government be not worth half a guinea, it is not easy to see how Whiggism can be viler than Toryism, or how the crown can have too little power. If the happiness of individuals is not affected by political abuses, zeal for liberty is doubtless ridiculous. But zeal for monarchy must be equally so. No person could have been more quick-sighted than Johnson to such a contradiction as this in the logic of an antagonist.

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[1] "No form of government has been yet discovered by which cruelty can be wholly prevented. Subordination supposes power on one hand and subjection on the other; and if power be in the hands of men, it will sometimes be abused. The vigilance of the supreme magistrate may do much, but much will still remain undone. He can never know all the crimes that are committed, and can seldom punish all that he knows" (*Rasselas*, ch. viii.).

The inconsistency is not so great as Macaulay would have us believe. He who believes that one form of government is little better than another will be averse to political change which usually involves a certain amount of trouble and waste, and he will be prone to regard eager advocates of reform as little better than charlatans.

[2] Boswell, ii., 170 (year 1772). He added: "When I say that all governments are alike, I consider that in no government power can be abused long. Mankind will not bear it. If a sovereign oppresses his people to a great degree they will rise and cut off his head."

The judgments which Johnson passed on books were, in his own time, regarded with superstitious veneration, and, in our time, are generally treated with indiscriminate contempt. They are the judgments of a strong but enslaved understanding. The mind of the critic was edged round by an uninterrupted fence of prejudices and superstitions. Within his narrow limits, he displayed a vigour and an activity which ought to have enabled him to clear the barrier that confined him.

How it chanced that a man who reasoned on his premises so ably, should assume his premises so foolishly, is one of the great mysteries of human nature. The same inconsistency may be observed in the schoolmen of the middle ages. Those writers show so much acuteness and force of mind in arguing on their wretched data, that a modern reader is perpetually at a loss to comprehend how such minds came by such data. Not a flaw in the superstructure of the theory which they are rearing escapes their vigilance. Yet they are blind to the obvious unsoundness of the foundation. It is the same with some eminent lawyers. Their legal arguments are intellectual prodigies, abounding with the happiest analogies and the most refined distinctions. The principles of their arbitrary science being once admitted, the statute-book and the reports being once assumed as the foundations of reasoning, these men must be allowed to be perfect masters of logic. But if a question arises as to the postulates on which their whole system rests, if they are called upon to vindicate the fundamental maxims of that system which they have passed their lives in studying, these very men often talk the language of savages or of children. Those who have listened to a man of this class in his own court, and who have witnessed the skill with which he analyses and digests a vast mass of evidence, or reconciles a crowd of precedents which at first sight seem contradictory, scarcely know him again when, a few hours later, they hear him speaking on the other side of Westminster Hall in his capacity of legislator. They can scarcely believe that the paltry quirks which are faintly heard through a storm of coughing, and which do not impose on the plainest country gentleman, can proceed from the same sharp and vigorous intellect which had excited their admiration under the same roof, and on the same day.

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[1] Thales said; *That life and death were all one.* One that was present asked him, *Why do you not die then?* Thales said again; *Because they are all one* (Bacon, *Apophthegms*).

Johnson decided literary questions like a lawyer, not like a legislator. He never examined foundations where a point was already ruled. His whole code of criticism rested on pure assumption, for which he sometimes quoted a precedent or an authority, but rarely troubled himself to give a reason drawn from the nature of things. He took it for granted that the kind of poetry which flourished in his own time, which he had been accustomed to hear praised from his childhood, and which he had himself written with success, was the best kind of poetry. In his biographical work he has repeatedly laid it down as an undeniable proposition that during the latter part of the seventeenth century, and the earlier part of the eighteenth, English poetry had been in a constant progress of improvement.[1] Waller, Denham, Dryden, and Pope, had been, according to him, the great reformers. He judged of all works of the imagination by the standard established among his own contemporaries. Though he allowed Homer to have been a greater man than Virgil, he seems to have thought the Æneid a greater poem than the Iliad. Indeed he well might have thought so; for he preferred Pope's Iliad to Homer's. He pronounced that, after Hoole's[2] translation of Tasso, Fairfax's[3] would hardly be reprinted. He could see no merit in our fine old English ballads, and always spoke with the most provoking contempt of Percy's fondness for them.[4] Of the great original works of imagination which appeared during his time, Richardson's novels alone excited his admiration. He could see little or no merit in Tom Jones, in Gulliver's Travels, or in Tristram Shandy. To Thomson's Castle of Indolence, he vouchsafed only a line of cold commendation, of commendation much colder than what he has bestowed on the Creation of that portentous bore, Sir Richard Blackmore.[1] Gray was, in his dialect, a barren rascal.[2] Churchill was a blockhead. The contempt which he felt for the trash of Macpherson was indeed just; but it was, we suspect, just by chance. He despised the Fingal for the very reason which led many men of genius to admire it. He despised it, not because it was essentially common-place, but because it had a superficial air of originality.

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[1] *E.g.*, "After about half a century of forced thoughts and rugged metre, some advances towards nature and harmony had been already made by Waller and Denham. . . . There was, therefore, before the time of Dryden no poetical diction, no system of words at once refined from the grossness of domestic use and free from the harshness of terms appropriated to particular arts. . . . The new versification, as it was called, may be considered as owing its establishment to Dryden; from whose time it is apparent that English poetry has had no tendency to relapse to its former savageness" (Johnson, "Life of Dryden").

[2] For Hoole, see p. 318.

[3] Fairfax, who died in 1635, translated Tasso in the eight-lined Italian stanza. In this century his version is acknowledged to be far more poetic than Hoole's.

[4] Thomas Percy, 1729-1811, who became Bishop of Dromore in 1782, gained a place in literary history by his *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* published in 1765 and his *Northern Antiquities* published in 1770.

He was undoubtedly an excellent judge of compositions fashioned on his own principles. But when a deeper philosophy was required, when he undertook to pronounce judgment on the works of those great minds which "yield homage only to eternal laws," his failure was ignominious. He criticized Pope's Epitaphs excellently. But his observations on Shakspeare's plays and Milton's poems seem to us for the most part as wretched as if they had been written by Rymer himself, whom we take to have been the worst critic that ever lived.

Some of Johnson's whims on literary subjects can be compared only to that strange nervous feeling which made him uneasy if he had not touched every post between the Mitre tavern and his own lodgings. His preference of Latin epitaphs to English epitaphs is an instance. An English epitaph, he said, would disgrace Smollet. He declared that he would not pollute the walls of Westminster Abbey with an English epitaph on Goldsmith.[3] What reason there can be for celebrating a British writer in Latin, which there was not for covering the Roman arches of triumph with Greek inscriptions, or for commemorating the deeds of the heroes of Thermopylæ in Egyptian hieroglyphics, we are utterly unable to imagine.

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[1] See p. 258.

[2] Macaulay was here writing from memory. The term "barren rascal" was applied by Johnson, not to Gray, but to Fielding (Boswell, *Tour to the Hebrides*, 6th April, 1772). Gray Johnson described as a dull fellow, "dull in company, dull in his closet, dull everywhere. He was dull in a new way and that made many people think him great. He was a mechanical poet" (Boswell, ii., 327, year 1775).

[3] Johnson having composed a Latin epitaph on Goldsmith and sent it to Sir Joshua Reynolds to be considered by the club, its members, including Reynolds himself, Burke, Gibbon and Joseph Warton, drew up a round robin to the effect that the epitaph had better be in English, which called forth the reply in the text (Boswell, iii., 81-85, year 1776).

On men and manners, at least on the men and manners of a particular place and a particular age, Johnson had certainly looked with a most observant and discriminating eye. His remarks on the education of children, on marriage, on the economy of families, on the rules of society, are always striking, and generally sound. In his writings, indeed, the knowledge of life which he possessed in an eminent degree is very imperfectly exhibited. Like those unfortunate chiefs of the middle ages who were suffocated by their own chain-mail and cloth of gold, his maxims perish under that load of words which was designed for their defence and their ornament. But it is clear from the remains of his conversation, that he had more of that homely wisdom which nothing but experience and observation can give than any writer since the time of Swift. If he had been content to write as he talked, he might have left books on the practical art of living superior to the Directions to Servants.[1]

Yet even his remarks on society, like his remarks on literature, indicate a mind at least as remarkable for narrowness as for strength. He was no master of the great science of human nature. He had studied, not the genus man, but the species Londoner. Nobody was ever so thoroughly conversant with all the forms of life and all the shades of moral and intellectual character which were to be seen from Islington to the Thames, and from Hyde-Park corner to Mile-end green. But his philosophy stopped at the first turnpike-gate. Of the rural life of England he knew nothing; and he took it for granted that every body who lived in the country was either stupid or miserable.[2] "Country gentlemen," said he, "must be unhappy; for they have not enough to keep their lives in motion;"[3] as if all those peculiar habits and associations which made Fleet Street and Charing Cross the finest views in the world to himself had been essential parts of human nature. Of remote countries and past times he talked with wild and ignorant presumption. "The Athenians of the age of Demosthenes," he said to Mrs. Thrale, "were a people of brutes, a barbarous people."[4] In conversation with Sir Adam Ferguson he used similar language. "The boasted Athenians," he said, "were barbarians. The mass of every people must be barbarous where there is no printing."[1] The fact was this: he saw that a Londoner who could not read was a very stupid and brutal fellow: he saw that great refinement of taste and activity of intellect were rarely found in a Londoner who had not read much; and, because it was by means of books that people acquired almost all their knowledge in the society with which he was acquainted, he concluded, in defiance of the strongest and clearest evidence, that the human mind can be cultivated by means of books alone. An Athenian citizen might possess very few volumes; and the largest library to which he had access might be much less valuable than Johnson's bookcase in Bolt Court. But the Athenian might pass every morning in conversation with Socrates, and might hear Pericles speak four or five times every month. He saw the plays of Sophocles and Aristophanes: he walked amidst the friezes of Phidias and the paintings of Zeuxis: he knew by heart the choruses of Æschylus: he heard the rhapsodist at the corner of the street reciting the shield of Achilles or the Death of Argus: he was a legislator, conversant with high questions of alliance, revenue, and war: he was a soldier, trained under a liberal and generous discipline: he was a judge compelled every day to weigh the effect of opposite arguments. These things were in themselves an education, an education eminently fitted, not, indeed, to form exact or profound thinkers, but to give quickness to the perceptions, delicacy to the taste, fluency to the expression, and politeness to the manners. All this was overlooked. An Athenian who did not improve his mind by reading was, in Johnson's opinion, much such a person as a Cockney who made his mark, much such a person as black Frank before he went to school,[2] and far inferior to a parish clerk or a printer's devil.

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[1] It is difficult to understand this reference to the *Directions to Servants* which, under cover of instruction, are a satire on the failings of servants and masters, displaying Swift's strong sense, keen wit and fierce contempt for human weakness, but scarcely affording rules for "the practical art of living."

[2] Dr. Birkbeck Hill has shown the exaggeration of this statement. Johnson spent a considerable portion of his time outside London and must have seen something of country life (Hill's edition of Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, vol. iii., Appendix B, p. 450).

[3] Boswell, *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*, 25th August.

[4] *Life of Johnson*, ii., 211 (year 1773).

Johnson's friends have allowed that he carried to a ridiculous extreme his unjust contempt for foreigners. He pronounced the French to be a very silly people, much behind us, stupid, ignorant creatures.[3] And this judgment he formed after having been at Paris about a month, during which he would not talk French, for fear of giving the natives an advantage over him in conversation. He pronounced them, also, to be an indelicate people, because a French footman touched the sugar with his fingers.[1] That ingenious and amusing traveller, M. Simond,[2] has defended his countrymen very successfully against Johnson's accusation, and has pointed out some English practices which, to an impartial spectator, would seem at least as inconsistent with physical cleanliness and social decorum as those which Johnson so bitterly reprehended. To the sage, as Boswell loves to call him, it never occurred to doubt that there must be something eternally and immutably good in the usages to which he had been accustomed. In fact, Johnson's remarks on society beyond the bills of mortality, are generally of much the same kind with those of honest Tom Dawson, the English footman in Dr. Moore's Zeluco.[3] "Suppose the king of France has no sons, but only a daughter, then, when the king dies, this here daughter, according to that there law, cannot be made queen, but the next near relative, provided he is a man, is made king, and not the last king's daughter, which, to be sure, is very unjust. The French footguards are dressed in blue, and all the marching regiments in white, which has a very foolish appearance for soldiers; and as for blue regimentals, it is only fit for the blue horse or the artillery."

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[1] Boswell, ii., 170 (year 1772).

[2] "Mr. Francis Barber, his faithful negro servant," who came into Johnson's service in 1752, whom he sent to school and whom he liberally remembered in his will.

[3] Expressions to much the same effect as those alleged in the text will be found in Boswell, iv., 15 (year 1780).

Johnson's visit to the Hebrides introduced him to a state of society completely new to him; and a salutary suspicion of his own deficiencies seems on that occasion to have crossed his mind for the first time. He confessed, in the last paragraph of his Journey, that his thoughts on national manners were the thoughts of one who had seen but little, of one who had passed his time almost wholly in cities. This feeling, however, soon passed away. It is remarkable that to the last he entertained a fixed contempt for all those modes of life and those studies which tend to emancipate the mind from the prejudices of a particular age or a particular nation. Of foreign travel and of history he spoke with the fierce and boisterous contempt of ignorance.[1] "What does a man learn by travelling? Is Beauclerk the better for travelling? What did Lord Charlemont learn in his travels, except that there was a snake in one of the pyramids of Egypt?"[2] History was, in his opinion, to use the fine expression of Lord Plunkett,[3] an old almanack: historians could, as he conceived, claim no higher dignity than that of almanack-makers; and his favourite historians were those who, like Lord Hailes,[4] aspired to no higher dignity. He always spoke with contempt of Robertson.[5] Hume he would not even read. He affronted one of his friends for talking to him about Catiline's conspiracy,[6] and declared that he never desired to hear of the Punic war again as long as he lived.

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[1] Boswell, ii., 403 (year 1775); iii., 352 (year 1778).

[2] Louis Simond, 1767-1831, left France in 1792, and, after travelling in America, lived some time in England. Returning to France he published after Waterloo his *Voyage d'un Français en Angleterre*. He also published accounts of his travels in Switzerland and Italy.

[3] John Moore, M.D., 1729-1802, a physician and a copious author, published in 1786 his first and best novel *Zeluco; various Views of Human Nature taken from Life and Manners, Foreign and Domestic.*

Assuredly one fact which does not directly affect our own interests, considered in itself, is no better worth knowing than another fact. The fact that there is a snake in a pyramid, or the fact that Hannibal crossed the Alps, are in themselves as unprofitable to us as the fact that there is a green blind in a particular house in Threadneedle Street, or the fact that a Mr. Smith comes into the city every morning on the top of one of the Blackwall stages. But it is certain that those who will not crack the shell of history will never get at the kernel. Johnson, with hasty arrogance, pronounced the kernel worthless, because he saw no value in the shell. The real use of travelling to distant countries and of studying the annals of past times is to preserve men from the contraction of mind which those can hardly escape whose whole communion is with one generation and one neighbourhood, who arrive at conclusions by means of an induction not sufficiently copious, and who therefore constantly confound exceptions with rules, and accidents with essential properties. In short, the real use of travelling and of studying history is to keep men from being what Tom Dawson was in fiction, and Samuel Johnson in reality.

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[1] Dr. Birkbeck Hill (vol. iii., Appendix B.) has denied this accusation, adducing schemes of foreign travel formed by Johnson.

[2] Boswell, iii., 352 (year 1778), not exactly quoted.

[3] See Parliamentary Debates, 28th February, 1825. William Conyngham Plunkett, 1764-1854, the eminent Irish lawyer and orator who distinguished himself as an opponent of the Union and an advocate of Catholic Emancipation. He was created a peer in 1827 and was Chancellor of Ireland from 1830 to 1841.

[4] David Dalrymple, Sir, Lord Hailes, 1726-1792, was a Scotch judge with a taste for learning. His chief historical work was the *Annals of Scotland from Malcolm Canmore to the Accession of the House of Stuart*, published 1776-1779. The *Annals* have been praised as "in this country a unique example of a matter-of-fact history in which every point is verified by reference to the original source from which it is derived." The circumstances that Lord Hailes had been educated in England, that he was the intimate friend of several clergymen of the English Church, and that he had written as a Christian apologist against Gibbon may have contributed to raise him in Johnson's opinion.

[5] William Robertson, 1721-1793, who published in 1759 a *History of Scotland*, in 1769 a *History of the Emperor Charles V.*, and in 1777 a *History of America*, was placed by his contemporaries in the first rank of historians, but has been left behind by the progress of historical knowledge. The same may be said of David Hume. That Robertson was a lax Presbyterian and Hume an avowed freethinker no doubt influenced Johnson's judgment of their historical writings.

[6] "I asked him once concerning the conversational powers of a gentleman with whom I was myself unacquainted. 'He talked to me at club one day,' replies our doctor, concerning Catiline's conspiracy—'so I withdrew my attention and thought about Tom Thumb'" (*Anecdotes* by Mrs. Piozzi, who also mentions his dislike to hearing of the Punic war, pp. 80, 81).

Johnson, as Mr. Burke most justly observed, appears far greater in Boswell's books than in his own.[1] His conversation appears to have been quite equal to his writings in matter, and far superior to them in manner. When he talked, he clothed his wit and his sense in forcible and natural expressions. As soon as he took his pen in his hand to write for the public, his style became systematically vicious. All his books are written in a learned language, in a language which nobody hears from his mother or his nurse, in a language in which nobody ever quarrels, or drives bargains, or makes love, in a language in which nobody ever thinks. It is clear that Johnson himself did not think in the dialect in which he wrote. The expressions which came first to his tongue were simple, energetic, and picturesque. When he wrote for publication, he did his sentences out of English into Johnsonese. His letters from the Hebrides to Mrs. Thrale are the original of that work of which the Journey to the Hebrides is the translation; and it is amusing to compare the two versions. "When we were taken up stairs," says he in one of his letters, "a dirty fellow bounced out of the bed on which one of us was to lie." This incident is recorded in the Journey as follows: "Out of one of the beds on which we were to repose started up, at our entrance, a man black as a Cyclops from the forge." [2] Sometimes Johnson translated aloud. "The Rehearsal," he said, very unjustly, "has not wit enough to keep it sweet;" then, after a pause, "it has not vitality enough to preserve it from putrefaction." [3]

Mannerism is pardonable, and is sometimes even agreeable, when the manner, though vicious, is natural. Few readers, for example, would be willing to part with the mannerism of Milton or of Burke. But a mannerism which does not sit easy on the mannerist, which has been adopted on principle, and which can be sustained only by constant effort, is always offensive. And such is the mannerism of Johnson.

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[1] *Memoirs of the Life of Mackintosh*, edited by R. J. Mackintosh, i., 92.

[2] *Works*, viii., 265 (edition of 1796). This incident occurred in the inn at Glenelg.

[3] Boswell, iv., 320 (year 1784). For "The Rehearsal" see p. 331. Clever as it is, Johnson's remark was not so unjust; for who now reads "The Rehearsal"?

The characteristic faults of his style are so familiar to all our readers, and have been so often burlesqued, that it is almost superfluous to point them out. It is well known that he made less use than any other eminent writer of those strong plain words, Anglo-Saxon or Norman-French, of which the roots lie in the inmost depths of our language; and that he felt a vicious partiality for terms which, long after our own speech had been fixed, were borrowed from the Greek and Latin, and which, therefore, even when lawfully naturalised, must be considered as born aliens, not entitled to rank with the king's English. His constant practice of padding out a sentence with useless epithets, till it became as stiff as the bust of an exquisite, his antithetical forms of expression, constantly employed even where there is no opposition in the ideas expressed, his big words wasted on little things, his harsh inversions, so widely different from those graceful and easy inversions which give variety, spirit, and sweetness to the expression of our great old writers, all these peculiarities have been imitated by his admirers and parodied by his assailants, till the public has become sick of the subject.

Goldsmith said to him, very wittily and very justly, "If you were to write a fable about little fishes, doctor, you would make the little fishes talk like whales."[1] No man surely ever had so little talent for personation as Johnson. Whether he wrote in the character of a disappointed legacy-hunter or an empty town fop, of a crazy virtuoso or a flippant coquette, he wrote in the same pompous and unbending style. His speech, like Sir Piercy Shafton's Euphuistic eloquence, bewrayed him under every disguise. Euphelia and Rhodoclea talk as finely as Imlac the poet, or Seged, Emperor of Ethiopia.[2] The gay Cornelia describes her reception at the country-house of her relations, in such terms as these: "I was surprised, after the civilities of my first reception, to find, instead of the leisure and tranquillity which a rural life always promises, and, if well conducted, might always afford, a confused wildness of care, and a tumultuous hurry of diligence, by which every face was clouded, and every motion agitated."[3]

[1] Boswell, ii., 231 (year 1773).

[2] *Rambler*, Nos. 42, 46, 62.

[3] *Ibid.*, No. 51.

The gentle Tranquilla informs us, that she "had not passed the earlier part of life without the flattery of courtship, and the joys of triumph; but had danced the round of gaiety amidst the murmurs of envy and the gratulations of applause, had been attended from pleasure to pleasure by the great, the sprightly, and the vain, and had seen her regard solicited by the obsequiousness of gallantry, the gaiety of wit, and the timidity of love."[1] Surely Sir John Falstaff himself did not wear his petticoats with a worse grace. The reader may well cry out, with honest Sir Hugh Evans, "I like not when a 'oman has a great peard: I spy a great peard under her muffler."[2]

We had something more to say. But our article is already too long; and we must close it. We would fain part in good humour from the hero, from the biographer, and even from the editor, who, ill as he has performed his task, has at least this claim to our gratitude, that he has induced us to read Boswell's book again. As we close it, the club-room is before us, and the table on which stands the omelet for Nugent,[3] and the lemons for Johnson. There are assembled those heads which live for ever on the canvass of Reynolds. There are the spectacles of Burke and the tall thin form of Langton, the courtly sneer of Beauclerk and the beaming smile of Garrick, Gibbon tapping his snuff-box and Sir Joshua with his trumpet in his ear. In the foreground is that strange figure which is as familiar to us as the figures of those among whom we have been brought up, the gigantic body, the huge massy face, seamed with the scars of disease, the brown coat, the black worsted stockings, the grey wig with the scorched foretop, the dirty hands, the nails bitten and pared to the quick. We see the eyes and mouth moving with convulsive twitches; we see the heavy form rolling; we hear it puffing; and then comes the "Why, sir!" and the "What then, sir?" and the "No, sir!" and the "You don't see your way through the question, sir!"

What a singular destiny has been that of this remarkable man! To be regarded in his own age as a classic, and in ours as a companion. To receive from his contemporaries that full homage which men of genius have in general received only from posterity! To be more intimately known to posterity than other men are known to their contemporaries! That kind of fame which is commonly the most transient is, in his case, the most durable. The reputation of those writings, which he probably expected to be immortal, is every day fading; while those peculiarities of manner and that careless table-talk the memory of which, he probably thought, would die with him, are likely to be remembered as long as the English language is spoken in any quarter of the globe.

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[1] *Rambler*, No. 119.

[2] "Merry Wives of Windsor," act iv., scene 2.

AUTHOR'S FOOTNOTE.—It is proper to observe that this passage bears a very close resemblance to a passage in the Rambler (No. 20). The resemblance may possibly be the effect of unconscious plagiarism.

[3] Christopher Nugent, died in 1775, a physician and Burke's father-in-law, was one of the original members of the Literary Club, and, being a Roman Catholic, took an omelette at the Friday dinners (Boswell, i., p. 477; Mrs. Piozzi, *Anecdotes*, p. 122).

JOHN HAMPDEN

DECEMBER, 1831

NOTE ON THE ESSAY

WE see in this essay the boldness with which Macaulay deserted his nominal subject to write about something which was to him more interesting or of which he had more knowledge. He drops Lord Nugent as quickly as courtesy will allow, and even passes lightly over the personal history of Hampden in order to set forth once more his general conception of the conflict between Charles I. and his Parliaments. Much that he had already said in his review of Hallam's *Constitutional History* he repeats here with little change of form and less of substance. The reader scarcely needs to be reminded that Macaulay had not made a minute study of the period, concerning which he only knew what could be found in books published down to that time, or that he interpreted its history too much according to the political sympathies and antipathies of the nineteenth century. This bias has induced him to overrate the political insight even of such a man as Hampden, and still more Hampden's power to master the forces which then convulsed England. We have no reason to think that Hampden foresaw the Revolution settlement in Church and State. We have every reason to doubt whether a man capable of such prevision would have gained the ear of his contemporaries. We may say with much plausibility that Hampden, like Pym, died at a moment happy for his own reputation. The immediate duty appointed to him, the difficult and dangerous duty of making a firm stand against the rapidly encroaching authority of the Crown, Hampden had performed with a temper, a dignity, a disinterestedness, a serene courage which place him in the foremost rank of great Englishmen, and ensure for him the respect and gratitude of men in all ages and countries who value rational freedom and the reign of law. The rest was to be brought about by time, by experience, by the exhaustion of hostile parties, by the slow diversion of the human mind to other than theological interests. So far as Macaulay fails to hit the mark he errs not in honouring Hampden as a public man, but in ascribing to Hampden too many of the ideas of modern liberalism. The best corrective will be found in Professor Gardiner's laborious studies of the Long Parliament and in Mr. Firth's admirable "Life of Hampden" in the *Dictionary of National Biography.*

JOHN HAMPDEN

Some Memorials of John Hampden, his Party, and his Times. BY LORD NUGENT. 2 vols. 8vo. London: 1831.

WE have read this book with great pleasure, though not exactly with that kind of pleasure which we had expected. We had hoped that Lord Nugent[1] would have been able to collect, from family papers and local traditions, much new and interesting information respecting the life and character of the renowned leader of the Long Parliament, the first of those great English commoners whose plain addition of Mister has, to our ears, a more majestic sound than the proudest of the feudal titles. In this hope we have been disappointed; but assuredly not from any want of zeal or diligence on the part of the noble biographer. Even at Hampden, there are, it seems, no important papers relating to the most illustrious proprietor of that ancient domain. The most valuable memorials of him which still exist, belong to the family of his friend Sir John Eliot.[2] Lord Eliot has furnished the portrait which is engraved for this work, together with some very interesting letters. The portrait is undoubtedly an original, and probably the only original now in existence. The intellectual forehead, the mild penetration of the eye, and the inflexible resolution expressed by the lines of the mouth, sufficiently guarantee the likeness. We shall probably make some extracts from the letters. They contain almost all the new information that Lord Nugent has been able to procure respecting the private pursuits of the great man whose memory he worships with an enthusiastic, but not extravagant veneration.

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[1] George Nugent Grenville, Baron Nugent, 1788-1850, the younger son of the Marquess of Buckingham, was a Whig politician and man of letters. He entered Parliament in 1812, and, when his party returned to power, was made first a Lord of the Treasury and afterwards Lord High Commissioner of the Ionian Islands. Beside the *Memorials* he wrote pamphlets, poetry and travels. But all have gently dropped into oblivion.

[2] John Eliot, Sir, 1592-1632, was the earliest leader of Opposition to the Crown in the reign of Charles I. In early life he was the friend of Buckingham who, on becoming Lord High Admiral, made Eliot Vice-Admiral of Devon. He first sat in the Parliament of 1614. In 1624 he was again elected, and, although already a champion of Parliamentary privilege, went with Buckingham in regard to the quarrel with Spain and the impeachment of the treasurer, Lord Middlesex. But in the first Parliament of Charles I. he broke away from Buckingham, and in the second, enraged at the failure of the expedition against Cadiz and the maladministration of the Navy, he joined in impeaching the duke and spoke against him so bitterly as to be sent to prison. After the impeachment had been cut short by a dissolution, Eliot was deprived of the post of Vice-Admiral. In the following year he was imprisoned for refusing to contribute to the forced loan. Eliot led the Commons in the conflict over the Petition of Right in the next Parliament. In the following session Eliot was again foremost in opposition to the Crown. The Parliament having been dissolved on the 10th of March, 1629, Eliot was called to account for his conduct in the House before the Court of King's Bench. Refusing to admit its jurisdiction over things done or spoken in Parliament he was sent to prison, and refusing to ask the King's pardon was kept here until he died.

The public life of Hampden is surrounded by no obscurity. His history, more particularly from the year 1640 to his death, is the history of England. These Memoirs must be considered as Memoirs of the history of England; and, as such, they well deserve to be attentively perused. They contain some curious facts which, to us at least, are new, much spirited narrative, many judicious remarks, and much eloquent declamation.

We are not sure that even the want of information respecting the private character of Hampden is not in itself a circumstance as strikingly characteristic as any which the most minute chronicler, O'Meara,[1] Mrs. Thrale, or Boswell himself, ever recorded concerning their heroes. The celebrated Puritan leader is an almost solitary instance of a great man who neither sought nor shunned greatness, who found glory only because glory lay in the plain path of duty. During more than forty years [2] he was known to his country neighbours as a gentleman of cultivated mind, of high principles, of polished address, happy in his family, and active in the discharge of local duties; and to political men as an honest, industrious, and sensible member of Parliament, not eager to display his talents, stanch to his party, and attentive to the interests of his constituents. A great and terrible crisis came. A direct attack was made by an arbitrary government on a sacred right of Englishmen, on a right which was the chief security for all their other rights. The nation looked round for a defender. Calmly and unostentatiously the plain Buckinghamshire Esquire placed himself at the head of his countrymen, and right before the face and across the path of tyranny. The times grew darker and more troubled. Public service, perilous, arduous, delicate, was required; and to every service the intellect and the courage of this wonderful man were found fully equal. He became a debater of the first order, a most dexterous manager of the House of Commons, a negotiator, a soldier. He governed a fierce and turbulent assembly, abounding in able men, as easily as he had governed his family. He showed himself as competent to direct a campaign as to conduct the business of the petty sessions.[1] We can scarcely express the admiration which we feel for a mind so great, and, at the same time, so healthful and so well proportioned, so willingly contracting itself to the humblest duties, so easily expanding itself to the highest, so contented in repose, so powerful in action. Almost every part of this virtuous and blameless life which is not hidden from us in modest privacy is a precious and splendid portion of our national history. Had the private conduct of Hampden afforded the slightest pretence for censure, he would have been assailed by the same blind malevolence which, in defiance of the clearest proofs, still continues to call Sir John Eliot an assassin.[2] Had there been even any weak part in the character of Hampden, had his manners been in any respect open to ridicule, we may be sure that no mercy would have been shown to him by the writers of Charles's faction. Those writers have carefully preserved every little circumstance which could tend to make their opponents odious or contemptible. They have made themselves merry with the cant of injudicious zealots. They have told us that Pym broke down in a speech, that Ireton had his nose pulled by Hollis, that the Earl of Northumberland cudgelled Henry Marten, that St. John's manners were sullen, that Vane had an ugly face, that Cromwell had a red nose. But neither the artful Clarendon nor the scurrilous Denham could venture to throw the slightest imputation on the morals or the manners of Hampden.[3] What was the opinion entertained respecting him by the best men of his time, we learn from Baxter.[1] That eminent person, eminent not only for his piety and his fervid devotional eloquence, but for his moderation, his knowledge of political affairs, and his skill in judging of characters, declared in the Saint's Rest, that one of the pleasures which he hoped to enjoy in heaven was the society of Hampden. In the editions printed after the Restoration, the name of Hampden was omitted. "But I must tell the reader," says Baxter, "that I did blot it out, not as changing my opinion of the person. . . . Mr. John Hampden was one that friends and enemies acknowledged to be most eminent for prudence, piety, and peaceable counsels, having the most universal praise of any gentleman that I remember of that age. I remember a moderate, prudent, aged gentleman, far from him, but acquainted with him, whom I have heard saying, that if he might choose what person he would be then in the world, he would be John Hampden." We cannot but regret that we have not fuller memorials of a man who, after passing through the most severe temptations by which human virtue can be tried, after acting a most conspicuous part in a revolution and a civil war, could yet deserve such praise as this from such authority. Yet the want of memorials is surely the best proof that hatred itself could find no blemish on his memory.

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[1] Barry O'Meara was a surgeon on board the *Bellerophon* and was appointed to attend on Napoleon on the voyage and in St. Helena. Removed in 1818, he gave an account of Napoleon's capitivity in *A Voice from St. Helena*, minute in detail, but of which the truthfulness has been called in question. It was published in 1822.

[2] It must not be inferred from this sentence, careless to a degree unusual with Macaulay, that Hampden was forty years in Parliament or even had forty years of a dull life. He died in his forty-ninth year and twenty-two years after he had first taken his seat in the House of Commons.

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[1] We have no adequate means of judging Hampden as a strategist or tactician, although we know that he was a brave and zealous officer.

[2] This charge had recently been repeated by Isaac Disraeli in his *Commentaries on the Life of Charles I.* It rests on the story that Eliot, when a young man, once drew his sword upon and wounded an acquaintance, a Mr. Moyle of Bake. It appears, however, that the wound was slight, and Mr. Moyle not merely forgave his assailant, but became his friend (see Disraeli, *Commentaries*, vol. ii., p. 269; Nugent, vol. i., p. 149).

[3] See p. 7. Denham wrote many squibs against the Puritans.

The story of his early life is soon told. He was the head of a family which had been settled in Buckinghamshire before the Conquest. Part of the estate which he inherited had been bestowed by Edward the Confessor on Baldwyn de Hampden, whose name seems to indicate that he was one of the Norman favourites of the last Saxon king. During the contest between the houses of York and Lancaster, the Hampdens adhered to the party of the Red Rose, and were, consequently, persecuted by Edward the Fourth, and favoured by Henry the Seventh. Under the Tudors, the family was great and flourishing. Griffith Hampden, high sheriff of Buckinghamshire, entertained Elizabeth with great magnificence at his seat. His son, William Hampden, sate in the Parliament which that Queen summoned in the year 1593. William married Elizabeth Cromwell, aunt of the celebrated man who afterwards governed the British Islands with more than regal power; and from this marriage sprang John Hampden.

He was born in 1594. In 1597 his father died, and left him heir to a very large estate. After passing some years at the grammar school of Thame, young Hampden was sent, at fifteen, to Magdalene College, in the University of Oxford. At nineteen, he was admitted a student of the Inner Temple, where he made himself master of the principles of the English law. In 1619, he married Elizabeth Symeon, a lady to whom he appears to have been fondly attached. In the following year he was returned to parliament by a borough which has in our time obtained a miserable celebrity, the borough of Grampound.[1]

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[1] Richard Baxter, 1615-1691, an eminent Puritan divine and most prolific author who has been termed "the creator of our popular Christian literature." Charles II. at first made him his chaplain and held out hopes of a bishopric; but Baxter would not swerve and preferred to share the sufferings of his brethren.

Of his private life during his early years little is known beyond what Clarendon has told us. "In his entrance into the world," says that great historian, "he indulged himself in all the license in sports, and exercises, and company, which were used by men of the most jolly conversation." A remarkable change, however, passed on his character. "On a sudden," says Clarendon, "from a life of great pleasure and license, he retired to extraordinary sobriety and strictness, to a more reserved and melancholy society."[2] It is probable that this change took place when Hampden was about twenty-five years old. At that age he was united to a woman whom he loved and esteemed. At that age he entered into political life. A mind so happily constituted as his would naturally, under such circumstances, relinquish the pleasures of dissipation for domestic enjoyments and public duties.

His enemies have allowed that he was a man in whom virtue showed itself in its mildest and least austere form. With the morals of a Puritan, he had the manners of an accomplished courtier. Even after the change in his habits, "he preserved," says Clarendon, "his own natural cheerfulness and vivacity, and, above all, a flowing courtesy to all men."[3] These qualities distinguished him from most of the members of his sect and his party, and, in the great crisis in which he afterwards took a principal part, were of scarcely less service to the country than his keen sagacity and his dauntless courage.

In January, 1621, Hampden took his seat in the House of Commons. His mother was exceedingly desirous that her son should obtain a peerage. His family, his possessions, and his personal accomplishments were such, as would, in any age, have justified him in pretending to that honour. But in the reign of James the First there was one short cut to the House of Lords. It was but to ask, to pay, and to have. The sale of titles was carried on as openly as the sale of boroughs in our times. Hampden turned away with contempt from the degrading honours with which his family desired to see him invested, and attached himself to the party which was in opposition to the court.

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[1] A Cornish borough famous for corruption and disfranchised by the Reform Act of 1832.

[2] Clarendon, *History of the Rebellion*, bk. iv., 31.

[3] *Ibid.*

It was about this time, as Lord Nugent has justly remarked, that parliamentary opposition began to take a regular form. From a very early age, the English had enjoyed a far larger share of liberty than had fallen to the lot of any neighbouring people. How it chanced that a country conquered and enslaved by invaders, a country of which the soil had been portioned out among foreign adventurers and of which the laws were written in a foreign tongue, a country given over to that worst tyranny, the tyranny of caste over caste,[1] should have become the seat of civil liberty, the object of the admiration and envy of surrounding states, is one of the most obscure problems in the philosophy of history. But the fact is certain. Within a century and a half after the Norman conquest, the Great Charter was conceded. Within two centuries after the Conquest, the first House of Commons met. Froissart tells us, what indeed his whole narrative sufficiently proves, that of all the nations of the fourteenth century, the English were the least disposed to endure oppression. "C'est le plus périlleux peuple qui soit au monde, et plus outrageux et orgueilleux." The good canon probably did not perceive that all the prosperity and internal peace which this dangerous people enjoyed were the fruits of the spirit which he designates as proud and outrageous. He has, however, borne ample testimony to the effect, though he was not sagacious enough to trace it to its cause. "En le royaume d'Angleterre," says he, "toutes gens, laboureurs et marchands, ont appris de vivre en paix, et à mener leurs marchandises paisiblement, et les laboureurs labourer." [2] In the fifteenth century, though England was convulsed by the struggle between the two branches of the royal family, the physical and moral condition of the people continued to improve. Villenage almost wholly disappeared. The calamities of war were little felt, except by those who bore arms. The oppressions of the government were little felt, except by the aristocracy. The institutions of the country, when compared with the institutions of the neighbouring kingdoms, seem to have been not undeserving of the praises of Fortescue.

[1] The Normans who, within little more than a century, had blended their blood with that of the native English were not, properly speaking, a caste.

[2] Froissart, *Chronicle*, ed. Bucbon, bk. iv., chs. 76 and 70.

The government of Edward the Fourth, though we call it cruel and arbitrary, was humane and liberal when compared with that of Lewis the Eleventh, or that of Charles the Bold. Comines, who had lived amidst the wealthy cities of Flanders, and who had visited Florence and Venice, had never seen a people so well governed as the English. "Or selon mon advis," says he, "entre toutes les seigneuries du monde, dont j'ay connoissance, ou la chose publique est mieulx traitée, et ou regne moins de violence sur le peuple, et ou il n'y a nuls édifices abbatus ny demolis pour guerre, c'est Angleterre; et tombe le sort et le malheur sur ceulx qui font la guerre."[1]

About the close of the fifteenth and the commencement of the sixteenth century, a great portion of the influence which the aristocracy had possessed passed to the crown. No English king has ever enjoyed such absolute power as Henry the Eighth. But while the royal prerogatives were acquiring strength at the expense of the nobility, two great revolutions took place, destined to be the parents of many revolutions, the invention of Printing, and the reformation of the Church.

The immediate effect of the Reformation in England was by no means favourable to political liberty. The authority which had been exercised by the Popes was transferred almost entire to the King. Two formidable powers which had often served to check each other were united in a single despot. If the system on which the founders of the Church of England acted could have been permanent, the Reformation would have been, in a political sense, the greatest curse that ever fell on our country. But that system carried within it the seeds of its own death. It was possible to transfer the name of Head of the Church from Clement to Henry; but it was impossible to transfer to the new establishment the veneration which the old establishment had inspired. Mankind had not broken one yoke in pieces only in order to put on another. The supremacy of the Bishop of Rome had been for ages considered as a fundamental principle of Christianity. It had for it every thing that could make a prejudice deep and strong, venerable antiquity, high authority, general consent. It had been taught in the first lessons of the nurse. It was taken for granted in all the exhortations of the priest. To remove it was to break innumerable associations, and to give a great and perilous shock to the principles. Yet this prejudice, strong as it was, could not stand in the great day of the deliverance of the human reason. And it was not to be expected that the public mind, just after freeing itself by an unexampled effort, from a bondage which it had endured for ages, would patiently submit to a tyranny which could plead no ancient title. Rome had at least prescription on its side. But Protestant intolerance, despotism in an upstart sect, infallibility claimed by guides who acknowledged that they had passed the greater part of their lives in error, restraints imposed on the liberty of private judgment at the pleasure of rulers who could vindicate their own proceedings only by asserting the liberty of private judgment, these things could not long be borne. Those who had pulled down the crucifix could not long continue to persecute for the surplice. It required no great sagacity to perceive the inconsistency and dishonesty of men who, dissenting from almost all Christendom, would suffer none to dissent from themselves, who demanded freedom of conscience, yet refused to grant it, who execrated persecution, yet persecuted, who urged reason against the authority of one opponent, and authority against the reasons of another. Bonner acted at least in accordance with his own principles. Cranmer could vindicate himself from the charge of being a heretic only by arguments which made him out to be a murderer.[1]

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[1] Comines, *Mémoires*, bk. v., ch. 19.

Thus the system on which the English Princes acted with respect to ecclesiastical affairs for some time after the Reformation was a system too obviously unreasonable to be lasting. The public mind moved while the government moved, but would not stop where the government stopped. The same impulse which had carried millions away from the Church of Rome continued to carry them forward in the same direction. As Catholics had become Protestants, Protestants became Puritans; and the Tudors and Stuarts were as unable to avert the latter change as the Popes had been to avert the former. The dissenting party increased and became strong under every kind of discouragement and oppression. They were a sect. The government persecuted them; and they became an opposition. The old constitution of England furnished to them the means of resisting the sovereign without breaking the law. They were the majority of the House of Commons. They had the power of giving or withholding supplies; and, by a judicious exercise of this power, they might hope to take from the Church its usurped authority over the consciences of men, and from the Crown some part of the vast prerogative which it had recently acquired at the expense of the nobles and of the Pope.

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[1] The unfairness of treating intolerance as specially characteristic of the Church of England or rather of the Arminian party in the Church has been remarked before. See p. 41.

The faint beginnings of this memorable contest may be discerned early in the reign of Elizabeth. The conduct of her last Parliament made it clear that one of those great revolutions which policy may guide but cannot stop was in progress. It was on the question of monopolies that the House of Commons gained its first great victory over the throne. The conduct of the extraordinary woman who then governed England is an admirable study for politicians who live in unquiet times. It shows how thoroughly she understood the people whom she ruled, and the crisis in which she was called to act. What she held she held firmly. What she gave she gave graciously. She saw that it was necessary to make a concession to the nation; and she made it not grudgingly, not tardily, not as a matter of bargain and sale, not, in a word, as Charles the First would have made it, but promptly and cordially. Before a bill could be framed or an address presented, she applied a remedy to the evil of which the nation complained. She expressed in the warmest terms her gratitude to her faithful Commons for detecting abuses which interested persons had concealed from her.[1] If her successors had inherited her wisdom with her crown, Charles the First might have died of old age, and James the Second would never have seen St. Germain's.

She died; and the kingdom passed to one who was, in his own opinion, the greatest master of king-craft that ever lived, but who was, in truth, one of those kings whom God seems to send for the express purpose of hastening revolutions. Of all the enemies of liberty whom Britain has produced, he was at once the most harmless and the most provoking. His office resembled that of the man who, in a Spanish bull-fight, goads the torpid savage to fury, by shaking a red rag in the air, and by now and then throwing a dart, sharp enough to sting, but too small to injure. The policy of wise tyrants has always been to cover their violent acts with popular forms. James was always obtruding his despotic theories on his subjects without the slightest necessity. His foolish talk exasperated them infinitely more than forced loans or benevolences would have done. Yet, in practice, no king ever held his prerogatives less tenaciously. He neither gave way gracefully to the advancing spirit of liberty nor took vigorous measures to stop it, but retreated before it with ludicrous haste, blustering and insulting as he retreated. The English people had been governed during near a hundred and fifty years by Princes who, whatever might be their frailties or their vices, had all possessed great force of character, and who, whether beloved or hated, had always been feared. Now, at length, for the first time since the day when the sceptre of Henry the Fourth dropped from the hand of his lethargic grandson, England had a king whom she despised.

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[1] See p. 481.

The follies and vices of the man increased the contempt which was produced by the feeble policy of the sovereign. The indecorous gallantries of the Court, the habits of gross intoxication in which even the ladies indulged, were alone sufficient to disgust a people whose manners were beginning to be strongly tinctured with austerity. But these were trifles. Crimes of the most frightful kind had been discovered; others were suspected. The strange story of the Gowries[1] was not forgotten. The ignominious fondness of the King for his minions, the perjuries, the sorceries, the poisonings, which his chief favourites had planned within the walls of his palace, the pardon which, in direct violation of his duty and of his word, he had granted to the mysterious threats of a murderer,[2] made him an object of loathing to many of his subjects. What opinion grave and moral persons residing at a distance from the Court entertained respecting him, we learn from Mrs. Hutchinson's Memoirs. England was no place, the seventeenth century no time, for Sporus and Locusta.[3]

This was not all. The most ridiculous weaknesses seemed to meet in the wretched Solomon of Whitehall, pedantry, buffoonery, garrulity, low curiosity, the most contemptible personal cowardice.

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[1] John, Earl of Gowrie, and his brother, Alexander Ruthven, attempted in 1600 to kidnap James, it was said, with the intention of carrying him off to England. Both were slain in the course of the affair. Rumour said that the King had discovered an attachment between the Queen and Alexander Ruthven; and he certainly was indebted to the brothers to a large amount.

[2] It has been supposed that Somerset, when condemned for the murder of Overbury (see below), extorted his pardon from James by threatening to disclose something disgraceful to James. But the matter is very obscure (see Gardiner, *History of England*, ch. xx.).

[3] Sporus was a minister of the infamous pleasures of the Emperor Nero. Locusta was a celebrated poisoner of the same period, whom Nero's mother, Agrippina, was said to have employed to remove her husband, Claudius, and Nero himself to remove his half-brother, Britannicus. The insinuation against James is unfair in both cases. It does not appear that he employed Somerset or Mrs. Turner for any evil purpose or tried to prevent their conviction.

Nature and education had done their best to produce a finished specimen of all that a king ought not to be. His awkward figure, his rolling eye, his rickety walk, his nervous tremblings, his slobbering mouth, his broad Scotch accent, were imperfections which might have been found in the best and greatest man. Their effect, however, was to make James and his office objects of contempt, and to dissolve those associations which had been created by the noble bearing of preceding monarchs, and which were in themselves no inconsiderable fence to royalty.

The sovereign whom James most resembled was, we think, Claudius Cæsar. Both had the same feeble vacillating temper, the same childishness, the same coarseness, the same poltroonery. Both were men of learning; both wrote and spoke, not, indeed, well, but still in a manner in which it seems almost incredible that men so foolish should have written or spoken. The follies and indecencies of James are well described in the words which Suetonius uses respecting Claudius: "Multa talia, etiam privatis deformia, nedum principi, neque infacundo, neque indocto, immo etiam pertinaciter liberalibus studiis dedito." The description given by Suetonius of the manner in which the Roman prince transacted business exactly suits the Briton. "In cognoscendo ac decernendo mira varietate animi fuit, modo circumspectus et sagax, modo inconsultus ac præceps, nonnunquam frivolus amentique similis." Claudius was ruled successively by two bad women: James successively by two bad men.[1] Even the description of the person of Claudius, which we find in the ancient memoirs, might, in many points, serve for that of James. "Ceterum et ingredientem destituebant poplites minus firmi, et remisse quid vel serio agentem multa dehonestabant, risus indecens, ira turpior, spumante rictu, præterea linguæ titubantia."

The Parliament which James had called soon after his accession had been refractory. His second Parliament, called in the spring of 1614, had been more refractory still. It had been dissolved after a session of two months; and during six years the King had governed without having recourse to the legislature. During those six years, melancholy and disgraceful events, at home and abroad, had followed one another in rapid succession; the divorce of Lady Essex,[2] the murder of Overbury, the elevation of Villiers, the pardon of Somerset, the disgrace of Coke,[1] the execution of Raleigh,[2] the battle of Prague, the invasion of the Palatinate by Spinola,[3] the ignominious flight of the son-in-law of the English king, the depression of the Protestant interest all over the Continent. All the extraordinary modes by which James could venture to raise money had been tried. His necessities were greater than ever; and he was compelled to summon the Parliament in which Hampden first appeared as a public man.

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[1] Claudius by his two wives, Messalina and Agrippina, James by Robert Carr whom he made Earl of Somerset and afterwards by George Villiers whom he made Duke of Buckingham.

[2] Frances Howard first became Lady Essex, and then wishing to marry Somerset, the King's favourite, obtained a divorce from her husband by corrupt proceedings and married her lover. Sir Thomas Overbury, a friend of Somerset,

This Parliament lasted about twelve months. During that time it visited with deserved punishment several of those who, during the preceding six years, had enriched themselves by peculation and monopoly. Michell, one of the grasping patentees who had purchased of the favourite the power of robbing the nation, was fined and imprisoned for life.[4] Mompesson, the original, it is said, of Massinger's Overreach, was outlawed and deprived of his ill gotten wealth.[5] Even Sir Edward Villiers, the brother of Buckingham, found it convenient to leave England.[6] A greater name is to be added to the ignominious list. By this Parliament was brought to justice that illustrious philosopher whose memory genius has half redeemed from the infamy due to servility, to ingratitude, and to corruption.

After redressing internal grievances, the Commons proceeded to take into consideration the state of Europe. The King flew into a rage with them for meddling with such matters, and, with

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who had warned his patron against the danger and disgrace of allying himself with such a woman, incurred the hatred of the countess, and Somerset probably joined her in a plot to poison Overbury. Some time after Overbury's death the conspiracy came to light, and the criminals were convicted, although Somerset and the countess were spared whilst their tools suffered death. Somerset's disgrace opened the way for a new favourite, George Villiers, 1592-1628, who became successively Master of the Horse, a Knight of the Garter, Viscount Villiers and Baron Waddon, Earl, Marquess and finally Duke of Buckingham.

[1] Sir Edward Coke, Lord Chief-Justice of England, was deprived of his office in 1616 for having resisted the King's interference with the administration of justice, a precedent several times repeated by the Stuarts.

[2] In 1619 Sir Walter Raleigh was executed on his return from the unsuccessful expedition to Guiana really because Spain so required, but technically on his conviction for treason in 1604.

[3] Frederick, the Elector Palatine who had married Elizabeth, daughter of James I., was persuaded by the Bohemians who had revolted against their Hapsburg sovereign, Ferdinand (afterwards the Emperor Ferdinand II.), to accept the crown of Bohemia. By so doing he kindled the Thirty Years' War. In October, 1620, the Bohemians were defeated on the White Mountain near Prague by the army which the combined Catholic Princes of Germany had sent to support Ferdinand. Frederick fled from Bohemia and soon after a Spanish army under Spinola attacked the Palatinate.

[4] See the essay on Bacon, vol. ii., p. 171.

[5] *Ibid.*

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 179.

characteristic judgment, drew them into a controversy about the origin of their House and of its privileges. When he found that he could not convince them, he dissolved them in a passion, and sent some of the leaders of the Opposition to ruminate on his logic in prison.

During the time which elapsed between this dissolution and the meeting of the next Parliament, took place the celebrated negotiation respecting the Infanta. The would-be despot was unmercifully browbeaten. The would-be Solomon was ridiculously overreached. Steenie,[1] in spite of the begging and sobbing of his dear dad and gossip, carried off baby Charles in triumph to Madrid.[2] The sweet lads, as James called them, came back safe, but without their errand. The great master of king-craft, in looking for a Spanish match, had found a Spanish war. In February, 1624, a Parliament met, during the whole sitting of which James was a mere puppet in the hands of his baby, and of his poor slave and dog. The Commons were disposed to support the King in the vigorous policy which his favourite urged him to adopt. But they were not disposed to place any confidence in their feeble sovereign and his dissolute courtiers, or to relax in their efforts to remove public grievances. They therefore lodged the money which they voted for the war in the hands of Parliamentary Commissioners. They impeached the treasurer, Lord Middlesex,[3] for corruption, and they passed a bill by which patents of monopoly were declared illegal.

Hampden did not, during the reign of James, take any prominent part in public affairs. It is certain, however, that he paid great attention to the details of Parliamentary business, and to the local interests of his own country. It was in a great measure owing to his exertions that Wendover and some other boroughs on which the popular party could depend recovered the elective franchise, in spite of the opposition of the Court.

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[1] Baby was the fond epithet bestowed by the King on Prince Charles, his second and only surviving son; Steenie was his pet name for Buckingham. Poor slave and dog was the affectedly abject description of himself used by Buckingham in addressing the King, and dear dad and gossip the equally abject description of himself used by the King in addressing Buckingham.

[2] James had long wished to marry Charles to a Spanish infanta, but Buckingham suggested to the prince that he should go to Spain to woo her in person and Buckingham browbeat the King into giving his consent.

[3] Lionel Cranfield, 1575-1645, a citizen of London whom the Earl of Northampton had introduced to the King and who rose through a series of administrative posts to be Treasurer. His success had been fairly won by industry, ability and economy. In 1622 he was created Earl of Middlesex. But he soon afterwards fell under the displeasure of Charles and Buckingham, who in defiance of the King's warning furthered his impeachment. Innocent or guilty he was condemned and driven from public life.

The health of the King had for some time been declining. On the twenty-seventh of March, 1625, he expired. Under his weak rule, the spirit of liberty had grown strong, and had become equal to a great contest. The contest was brought on by the policy of his successor. Charles bore no resemblance to his father. He was not a driveller, or a pedant, or a buffoon, or a coward. It would be absurd to deny that he was a scholar and a gentleman, a man of exquisite taste in the fine arts, a man of strict morals in private life. His talents for business were respectable; his demeanour was kingly. But he was false, imperious, obstinate, narrow-minded, ignorant of the temper of his people, unobservant of the signs of his times. The whole principle of his government was resistance to public opinion; nor did he make any real concession to that opinion till it mattered not whether he resisted or conceded, till the nation, which had long ceased to love him or to trust him, had at last ceased to fear him.

His first Parliament met in June, 1625. Hampden sat in it as burgess for Wendover. The King wished for money. The Commons wished for the redress of grievances. The war, however, could not be carried on without funds. The plan of the Opposition was, it should seem, to dole out supplies by small sums, in order to prevent a speedy dissolution. They gave the King two subsidies only, and proceeded to complain that his ships had been employed against the Huguenots in France, and to petition in behalf of the Puritans who were persecuted in England. The King dissolved them, and raised money by Letters under his Privy Seal. The supply fell far short of what he needed; and, in the spring of 1626, he called together another Parliament. In this Parliament, Hampden again sat for Wendover.

The Commons resolved to grant a very liberal supply, but to defer the final passing of the act for that purpose till the grievances of the nation should be redressed. The struggle which followed far exceeded in violence any that had yet taken place. The Commons impeached Buckingham. The King threw the managers of the impeachment into prison. The Commons denied the right of the King to levy tonnage and poundage without their consent. The King dissolved them. They put forth a remonstrance. The King circulated a declaration vindicating his measures, and committed some of the most distinguished members of the Opposition to close custody. Money was raised by a forced loan, which was apportioned among the people according to the rate at which they had been respectively assessed to the last subsidy. On this occasion it was that Hampden made his first stand for the fundamental principle of the English constitution. He positively refused to lend a farthing. He was required to give his reasons. He answered, "that he could be content to lend as well as others, but feared to draw upon himself that curse in Magna Charta which should be read twice a year against those who infringe it."[1] For this spirited answer, the Privy Council committed him close prisoner to the Gate House.[2] After some time, he was again brought up; but he persisted in his refusal, and was sent to a place of confinement in Hampshire.

The government went on, oppressing at home, and blundering in all its measures abroad. A war was foolishly undertaken against France, and more foolishly conducted. Buckingham led an expedition against Rhé, and failed ignominiously. In the mean time soldiers were billeted on the people. Crimes of which ordinary justice should have taken cognisance were punished by martial law. Near eighty gentlemen were imprisoned for refusing to contribute to the forced loan. The lower people who showed any signs of insubordination were pressed into the fleet, or compelled to serve in the army. Money, however, came in slowly; and the King was compelled to summon another Parliament. In the hope of conciliating his subjects, he set at liberty the persons who had been imprisoned for refusing to comply with his unlawful demands. Hampden regained his freedom, and was immediately re-elected burgess for Wendover.

Early in 1628 the Parliament met. During its first session, the Commons prevailed on the King, after many delays and much equivocation, to give, in return for five subsidies, his full and solemn assent to that celebrated instrument, the second great charter of the liberties of England, known by the name of the Petition of Right. By agreeing to this act, the King bound himself to raise no taxes without the consent of Parliament, to imprison no man except by legal process, to billet no more soldiers on the people, and to leave the cognisance of offences to the ordinary tribunals.

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[1] The solemn sentence of excommunication denounced by the bishops in 1253 against all who should violate the provisions of the charter. The story has been called in question.

[2] A prison near the west end of Westminster Abbey which had formed part of the old monastic buildings and was pulled down in 1776 by order of the dean and chapter.

In the summer, this memorable Parliament was prorogued. It met again in January, 1629. Buckingham was no more. That weak, violent, and dissolute adventurer, who, with no talents or acquirements but those of a mere courtier, had, in a great crisis of foreign and domestic politics, ventured on the part of prime minister, had fallen, during the recess of Parliament, by the hand of an assassin. Both before and after his death the war had been feebly and unsuccessfully conducted. The King had continued, in direct violation of the Petition of Right, to raise tonnage and poundage without the consent of Parliament.[1] The troops had again been billeted on the people; and it was clear to the Commons that the five subsidies which they had given as the price of the national liberties had been given in vain.

They met accordingly in no complying humour. They took into their most serious consideration the measures of the government concerning tonnage and poundage. They summoned the officers of the custom-house to their bar. They interrogated the barons of the exchequer. They committed one of the sheriffs of London. Sir John Eliot, a distinguished member of the Opposition, and an intimate friend of Hampden, proposed a resolution condemning the unconstitutional imposition. The Speaker said that the King had commanded him to put no such question to the vote. This decision produced the most violent burst of feeling ever seen within the walls of Parliament. Hayman remonstrated vehemently against the disgraceful language which had been heard from the chair. Eliot dashed the paper which contained his resolution on the floor of the House, Valentine[2] and Hollis[3] held the Speaker down in his seat by main force, and read the motion amidst the loudest shouts. The door was locked. The key was laid on the table. Black Rod knocked for admittance in vain. After passing several strong resolutions, the House adjourned. On the day appointed for its meeting it was dissolved by the King, and several of its most eminent members, among whom were Hollis and Sir John Eliot, were committed to prison.

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[1] See p. 38.

[2] Benjamin Valentine entered Parliament in 1628. He also was imprisoned and remained a prisoner till 1640. He was elected a member of the Long Parliament. He died before 1653.

[3] Denzil Hollis, 1599-1680, first entered Parliament in 1624. For the conduct above described he was imprisoned after the dissolution. In the Long Parliament he was a leader of the Presbyterian party. During the Commonwealth he was shut out from power. After the Restoration he became a peer and a privy councillor, but continued to act an independent part.

Though Hampden had as yet taken little part in the debates of the House, he had been a member of many very important committees, and had read and written much concerning the law of Parliament. A manuscript volume of Parliamentary cases, which is still in existence, contains many extracts from his notes.

He now retired to the duties and pleasures of a rural life. During the eleven years which followed the dissolution of the Parliament of 1628, he resided at his seat in one of the most beautiful parts of the county of Buckingham. The house, which has since his time been greatly altered, and which is now, we believe, almost entirely neglected, was an old English mansion, built in the days of the Plantagenets and the Tudors. It stood on the brow of a hill which overlooks a narrow valley. The extensive woods which surround it were pierced by long avenues. One of those avenues the grandfather of the great statesman had cut for the approach of Elizabeth; and the opening, which is still visible for many miles, retains the name of the Queen's Gap. In this delightful retreat, Hampden passed several years, performing with great activity all the duties of a landed gentleman and a magistrate, and amusing himself with books and with field sports.

He was not in his retirement unmindful of his persecuted friends. In particular, he kept up a close correspondence with Sir John Eliot, who was confined in the Tower. Lord Nugent has published several of the Letters. We may perhaps be fanciful; but it seems to us that every one of them is an admirable illustration of some part of the character of Hampden which Clarendon has drawn.

Part of the correspondence relates to the two sons of Sir John Eliot. These young men were wild and unsteady; and their father, who was now separated from them, was naturally anxious about their conduct. He at length resolved to send one of them to France, and the other to serve a campaign in the Low Countries. The letter which we subjoin shows that Hampden, though rigorous towards himself, was not uncharitable towards others, and that his puritanism was perfectly compatible with the sentiments and the tastes of an accomplished gentleman. It also illustrates admirably what has been said of him by Clarendon: "He was of that rare affability and temper in debate, and of that seeming humility and submission of judgment, as if he brought no opinion of his own with him, but a desire of information and instruction. Yet he had so subtle a way of interrogating, and, under cover of doubts, insinuating his objections, that he infused his own opinions into those from whom he pretended to learn and receive them."[1]

The letter runs thus: "I am so perfectly acquainted with your clear insight into the dispositions of men, and ability to fit them with courses suitable, that, had you bestowed sons of mine as you have done your own, my judgment durst hardly have called it into question, especially when, in laying the design, you have prevented the objections to be made against it. For if Mr. Richard Eliot will, in the intermissions of action, add study to practice, and adorn that lively spirit with flowers of contemplation, he will raise our expectations of another Sir Edward Vere, that had this character—all summer in the field, all winter in his study—in whose fall fame makes this kingdom a great loser; and, having taken this resolution from counsel with the highest wisdom, as I doubt not you have, I hope and pray that the same power will crown it with a blessing answerable to our wish. The way you take with my other friend shows you to be none of the Bishop of Exeter's converts;[2] of whose mind neither am I superstitiously. But had my opinion been asked, I should, as vulgar conceits use me to do, have showed my power rather to raise objections than to answer them. A temper between France and Oxford, might have taken away his scruples, with more advantage to his years. . . . For although he be one of those that, if his age were looked for in no other book but that of the mind, would be found no ward if you should die to-morrow, yet it is a great hazard, methinks, to see so sweet a disposition guarded with no more, amongst a people whereof many make it their religion to be superstitious in impiety, and their behaviour to be affected in ill manners. But God, who only knoweth the periods of life and opportunities to come, hath designed him, I hope, for his own service betime, and stirred up your providence to husband him so early for great affairs. Then shall he be sure to find Him in France that Abraham did in Sechem and Joseph in Egypt, under whose wing alone is perfect safety."[3]

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[1] Clarendon, *History of the Rebellion*, bk. vii., 83.

[2] AUTHOR'S FOOTNOTE.—Hall, Bishop of Exeter, had written strongly, both in verse and in prose, against the fashion of sending young men of quality to travel.

[3] Nugent, vol. i., pp. 164-167.

Sir John Eliot employed himself, during his imprisonment, in writing a treatise on government, which he transmitted to his friend. Hampden's criticisms are strikingly characteristic. They are written with all that "flowing courtesy" which is ascribed to him by Clarendon. The objections are insinuated with so much delicacy that they could scarcely gall the most irritable author. We see too how highly Hampden valued in the writings of others that conciseness which was one of the most striking peculiarities of his own eloquence. Sir John Eliot's style was, it seems, too diffuse, and it is impossible not to admire the skill with which this is suggested. "The piece," says Hampden, "is as complete an image of the pattern as can be drawn by lines, a lively character of a large mind, the subject, method, and expression, excellent and homogeneal, and, to say truth, sweetheart, somewhat exceeding my commendations. My words cannot render them to the life. Yet, to show my ingenuity rather than wit, would not a less model have given a full representation of that subject, not by diminution but by contraction of parts? I desire to learn. I dare not say. The variations upon each particular seem many; all, I confess, excellent. The fountain was full, the channel narrow; that may be the cause; or that the author resembled Virgil, who made more verses by many than he intended to write. To extract a just number, had I seen all his, I could easily have bid him make fewer; but if he had bade me tell him which he should have spared, I had been posed."[1]

This is evidently the writing not only of a man of good sense and natural good taste, but of a man of literary habits. Of the studies of Hampden little is known. But as it was at one time in contemplation to give him the charge of the education of the Prince of Wales,[2] it cannot be doubted that his acquirements were considerable. Davila, it is said, was one of his favourite writers. The moderation of Davila's opinions and the perspicuity and manliness of his style could not but recommend him to so judicious a reader. It is not improbable that the parallel between France and England, the Huguenots and the Puritans, had struck the mind of Hampden, and that he already found within himself powers not unequal to the lofty part of Coligni.

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[1] Nugent, vol. i., p. 169. The expression sweetheart was then admissible between male friends.

[2] This appears to be incorrect. Considering the part played by Hampden, the King would scarcely have chosen him for such an office. But we are told that at the time when the King was supposed desirous of employing the Parliamentary leaders, Hampden wished to be governor to the prince in order to teach him sound political principles.

While he was engaged in these pursuits, a heavy domestic calamity fell on him. His wife, who had borne him nine children, died in the summer of 1634. She lies in the parish church of Hampden, close to the manor-house. The tender and energetic language of her epitaph still attests the bitterness of her husband's sorrow, and the consolation which he found in a hope full of immortality.

In the mean time, the aspect of public affairs grew darker and darker. The health of Eliot had sunk under an unlawful imprisonment of several years. The brave sufferer refused to purchase liberty, though liberty would to him have been life, by recognising the authority which had confined him. In consequence of the representations of his physicians, the severity of restraint was somewhat relaxed. But it was in vain. He languished and expired a martyr to that good cause for which his friend Hampden was destined to meet a more brilliant, but not a more honourable death.

All the promises of the King were violated without scruple or shame. The Petition of Right, to which he had, in consideration of monies duly numbered, given a solemn assent, was set at nought. Taxes were raised by the royal authority. Patents of monopoly were granted. The old usages of feudal times were made pretexts for harassing the people with exactions unknown during many years.[1] The Puritans were persecuted with cruelty worthy of the Holy Office. They were forced to fly from the country. They were imprisoned. They were whipped. Their ears were cut off. Their noses were slit. Their cheeks were branded with red-hot iron. But the cruelty of the oppressor could not tire out the fortitude of the victims. The mutilated defenders of liberty again defied the vengeance of the Star Chamber, came back with undiminished resolution to the place of their glorious infamy, and manfully presented the stumps of their ears to be grubbed out by the hangman's knife. The hardy sect grew up and flourished in spite of every thing that seemed likely to stunt it, struck its roots deep into a barren soil, and spread its branches wide to an inclement sky. The multitude thronged round Prynne[1] in the pillory with more respect than they paid to Mainwaring[2] in the pulpit, and treasured up the rags which the blood of Burton[3] had soaked, with a veneration such as mitres and surplices had ceased to inspire.

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[1] A reference to the distraint of knighthood, whereby every man having a freehold of the value of £40 a year or over was summoned to receive knighthood or to compound for failing to do so. It was a decree partly financial, partly political, of Edward I. revived in a totally different state of society for the sole purpose of raising money.

For the misgovernment of this disastrous period Charles himself is principally responsible. After the death of Buckingham, he seems to have been his own prime minister. He had, however, two counsellors who seconded him, or went beyond him, in intolerance and lawless violence, the one a superstitious driveller, as honest as a vile temper would suffer him to be, the other a man of great valour and capacity, but licentious, faithless, corrupt, and cruel.

Never were faces more strikingly characteristic of the individuals to whom they belonged, than those of Laud and Strafford, as they still remain portrayed by the most skilful hand of that age. The mean forehead, the pinched features, the peering eyes, of the prelate, suit admirably with his disposition. They mark him out as a lower kind of Saint Dominic, differing from the fierce and gloomy enthusiast who founded the Inquisition,[4] as we might imagine the familiar imp of a spiteful witch to differ from an archangel of darkness. When we read His Grace's judgments, when we read the report which he drew up, setting forth that he had sent some separatists to prison, and imploring the royal aid against others, we feel a movement of indignation. We turn to his Diary, and we are at once as cool as contempt can make us. There we learn how his picture fell down, and how fearful he was lest the fall should be an omen; how he dreamed that the Duke of Buckingham came to bed to him, that King James walked past him, that he saw Thomas Flaxney in green garments, and the Bishop of Worcester with his shoulders wrapped in linen. In the early part of 1627, the sleep of this great ornament of the church seems to have been much disturbed. On the fifth of January, he saw a merry old man with a wrinkled countenance, named Grove, lying on the ground. On the fourteenth of the same memorable month, he saw the Bishop of Lincoln jump on a horse and ride away. A day or two after this he dreamed that he gave the King drink in a silver cup, and that the King refused it, and called for glass. Then he dreamed that he had turned Papist; of all his dreams the only one, we suspect, which came through the gate of horn.[1] But of these visions our favourite is that which, as he has recorded, he enjoyed on the night of Friday, the ninth of February, 1627. "I dreamed," says he, "that I had the scurvy; and that forthwith all my teeth became loose. There was one in especial in my lower jaw, which I could scarcely keep in with my finger till I had called for help."[2] Here was a man to have the superintendence of the opinions of a great nation!

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[1] William Prynne, 1600-1669, the Puritan pamphleteer, was sentenced to the pillory and mutilation of his ears, first in 1634 for his *Histrio-Mastix*, an attack upon plays and players, and again in 1637 for having written against the bishops.

[2] Roger Mainwaring, 1590-1653, became a chaplain to Charles I. and was impeached in 1628 for two sermons in which he denied that the consent of Parliament was necessary to taxation.

[3] Henry Burton, 1578-1648, for having preached against the bishops, was included in a common indictment with Prynne in 1637 and was sentenced to the pillory and loss of his ears.

[4] A mistake. See p. 52.

But Wentworth,—who ever names him without thinking of those harsh dark features, ennobled by their expression into more than the majesty of an antique Jupiter; of that brow, that eye, that cheek, that lip, wherein, as in a chronicle, are written the events of many stormy and disastrous years, high enterprise accomplished, frightful dangers braved, power unsparingly exercised, suffering unshrinkingly borne; of that fixed look, so full of severity, of mournful anxiety, of deep thought, of dauntless resolution, which seems at once to forebode and to defy a terrible fate, as it lowers on us from the living canvass of Vandyke? Even at this day the haughty earl overawes posterity as he overawed his contemporaries, and excites the same interest when arraigned before the tribunal of history which he excited at the bar of the House of Lords. In spite of ourselves, we sometimes feel towards his memory a certain relenting similar to that relenting which his defence, as Sir John Denham tells us, produced in Westminster Hall.

This great, brave, bad man entered the House of Commons at the same time with Hampden, and took the same side with Hampden. Both were among the richest and most powerful commoners in the kingdom. Both were equally distinguished by force of character, and by personal courage. Hampden had more judgment and sagacity than Wentworth. But no orator of that time equalled Wentworth in force and brilliancy of expression. In 1626 both these eminent men were committed

[1] "Sunt geminæ Somni portæ: quarum altera fertur
Cornea, quâ veris facilis datur exitus Umbris:
Altera, candenti perfecta nitens elephanto;
Sed falsa ad cœlum mittunt insomnia Manes."
—*Æneid*, bk. vi., lines 894-897.

[2] Laud, *Diary*, *Works*, vol. iii. (edition of 1850).

to prison by the King, Wentworth, who was among the leaders of the Opposition, on account of his parliamentary conduct, Hampden, who had not as yet taken a prominent part in debate, for refusing to pay taxes illegally imposed.

Here their path separated. After the death of Buckingham, the King attempted to seduce some of the chiefs of the Opposition from their party; and Wentworth was among those who yielded to the seduction. He abandoned his associates, and hated them ever after with the deadly hatred of a renegade. High titles and great employments were heaped upon him. He became Earl of Strafford, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, President of the Council of the North; and he employed all his power for the purpose of crushing those liberties of which he had been the most distinguished champion. His counsels respecting public affairs were fierce and arbitrary. His correspondence with Laud abundantly proves that government without parliaments, government by the sword, was his favourite scheme. He was angry even that the course of justice between man and man should be unrestrained by the royal prerogative. He grudged to the Courts of King's Bench and Common Pleas even that measure of liberty which the most absolute of the Bourbons allowed to the Parliaments of France. In Ireland, where he stood in place of the King, his practice was in strict accordance with his theory. He set up the authority of the executive government over that of the courts of law. He permitted no person to leave the island without his license. He established vast monopolies for his own private benefit.[1] He imposed taxes arbitrarily. He levied them by military force. Some of his acts are described even by the partial Clarendon as powerful acts, acts which marked a nature excessively imperious, acts which caused dislike and terror in sober and dispassionate persons, high acts of oppression. Upon a most frivolous charge, he obtained a capital sentence from a court-martial against a man of high rank who had given him offence.[2] He debauched the daughter-in-law of the Lord Chancellor of Ireland, and then commanded that nobleman to settle his estate according to the wishes of the lady. The Chancellor refused.[3] The Lord Lieutenant turned him out of office, and threw him into prison. When the violent acts of the Long

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[1] He now, for instance, imposed a licence upon the retail of tobacco, and himself farmed the privilege for an annual rent of £7,000 and, finally, of £12,000 (Browning, *Life of Strafford*, p. 180). But the accusation in the text, taken in its full extent, is unwarranted by facts.

[2] See p. 139.

[3] *Ibid.*

Parliament are blamed, let it not be forgotten from what a tyranny they rescued the nation.

Among the humbler tools of Charles were Chief-Justice Finch[1] and Noy the Attorney-General.[2] Noy had, like Wentworth, supported the cause of liberty in Parliament, and had, like Wentworth, abandoned that cause for the sake of office. He devised, in conjunction with Finch, a scheme of exaction which made the alienation of the people from the throne complete. A writ was issued by the King, commanding the city of London to equip and man ships of war for his service. Similar writs were sent to the towns along the coast. These measures, though they were direct violations of the Petition of Right, had at least some show of precedent in their favour. But, after a time, the government took a step for which no precedent could be pleaded, and sent writs of ship-money to the inland counties. This was a stretch of power on which Elizabeth herself had not ventured, even at a time when all laws might with propriety have been made to bend to that highest law, the safety of the state. The inland counties had not been required to furnish ships, or money in the room of ships, even when the Armada was approaching our shores. It seemed intolerable that a prince who, by assenting to the Petition of Right, had relinquished the power of levying ship-money even in the out-ports, should be the first to levy it on parts of the kingdom where it had been unknown under the most absolute of his predecessors.

Clarendon distinctly admits that this tax was intended, not only for the support of the navy, but "for a spring and magazine that should have no bottom, and for an everlasting supply of all occasions."[3] The nation well understood this; and from one end of England to the other the public mind was strongly excited.

Buckinghamshire was assessed at a ship of four hundred and fifty tons, or a sum of four thousand five hundred pounds. The share of the tax which fell to Hampden was very small; so small, indeed, that the sheriff was blamed for setting so wealthy a man at so low a rate. But, though the sum demanded was a trifle, the principle involved was fearfully important. Hampden, after consulting the most eminent constitutional lawyers of the time, refused to pay the few shillings at which he was assessed, and determined to incur all the certain expense, and the probable danger, of bringing to a solemn hearing this great controversy between the people and the Crown. "Till this time," says Clarendon, "he was rather of reputation in his own country than of public discourse or fame in the kingdom; but then he grew the argument of all tongues, every man inquiring who and what he was that durst, at his own charge, support the liberty and prosperity of the kingdom." [1]

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[1] John Finch (afterwards Baron Finch), 1584-1660, entered Parliament in 1614 and was Speaker in the Parliament of 1628. He became Chief-Justice of the Common Pleas in 1634 and Lord Keeper in 1640. Impeached in the Long Parliament, he fled the country and did not return until the Restoration.

[2] William Noy, 1577-1634, entered Parliament in 1604. In the Parliament of 1628 he was active in the popular cause, but afterwards changed sides and was made Attorney-General in 1631.

[3] Clarendon, bk. i., 148.

Towards the close of the year 1636, this great cause came on in the Exchequer Chamber before all the judges of England. The leading counsel against the writ was the celebrated Oliver St. John,[2] a man whose temper was melancholy, whose manners were reserved, and who was as yet little known in Westminster Hall, but whose great talents had not escaped the penetrating eye of Hampden. The Attorney-General and Solicitor-General appeared for the Crown.

The arguments of the counsel occupied many days; and the Exchequer Chamber took a considerable time for deliberation. The opinion of the bench was divided. So clearly was the law in favour of Hampden that, though the judges held their situations only during the royal pleasure, the majority against him was the least possible. Five of the twelve pronounced in his favour. The remaining seven gave their voices for the writ.

The only effect of this decision was to make the public indignation stronger and deeper. "The judgment," says Clarendon, "proved of more advantage and credit to the gentlemen condemned than to the King's service." [3] The courage which Hampden had shown on this occasion, as the same historian tells us, "raised his reputation to a great height generally throughout the kingdom." Even courtiers and crown-lawyers spoke respectfully of him. "His carriage," says Clarendon, "throughout that agitation, was with that rare temper and modesty, that they who watched him narrowly to find some advantage against his person, to make him less resolute in his cause, were compelled to give him a just testimony."[1] But his demeanour, though it impressed Lord Falkland with the deepest respect, though it drew forth the praises of Solicitor-General Herbert,[2] only kindled into a fiercer flame the ever-burning hatred of Strafford. That minister in his letters to Laud murmured against the lenity with which Hampden was treated. "In good faith," he wrote, "were such men rightly served, they should be whipped into their right wits." Again he says, "I still wish Mr. Hampden, and others to his likeness, were well whipped into their right senses. And if the rod be so used that it smart not, I am the more sorry."

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[1] Clarendon, bk. vii., 82.

[2] Oliver St. John, 1598-1673, was counsel for Hampden in the ship-money case, 1637, was a member of the Short and of the Long Parliaments, and was made Solicitor-General by Charles in 1641 in the hope of disarming his hostility to the Crown. St. John was not to be thus conciliated, but took an active part in the attainder of Strafford, was appointed one of the commissioners of the Great Seal by the Commons after the outbreak of war, supported the Self-Denying Ordinance and was made Chief-Justice of the Common Pleas in 1648. He was a connection by marriage of Oliver Cromwell, and remained his friend although disapproving of some of his acts. After the Restoration he went abroad and never returned to England.

[3] Clarendon, bk. i., 148.

The person of Hampden was now scarcely safe. His prudence and moderation had hitherto disappointed those who would gladly have had a pretence for sending him to the prison of Eliot. But he knew that the eye of a tyrant was on him. In the year 1637 misgovernment had reached its height. Eight years had passed without a Parliament. The decision of the Exchequer Chamber had placed at the disposal of the Crown the whole property of the English people. About the time at which that decision was pronounced, Prynne, Bastwick, and Burton, were mutilated by the sentence of the Star Chamber, and sent to rot in remote dungeons. The estate and the person of every man who had opposed the court were at its mercy.

Hampden determined to leave England. Beyond the Atlantic Ocean, a few of the persecuted Puritans had formed, in the wilderness of Connecticut, a settlement which has since become a prosperous commonwealth, and which, in spite of the lapse of time and of the change of government, still retains something of the character given to it by its first founders. Lord Saye and Lord Brooke[3] were the original projectors of this scheme of emigration. Hampden had been early consulted respecting it. He was now, it appears, desirous to withdraw himself beyond the reach of oppressors who, as he probably suspected, and as we know, were bent on punishing his manful resistance to their tyranny. He was accompanied by his kinsman Oliver Cromwell, over whom he possessed great influence, and in whom he alone had discovered, under an exterior appearance of coarseness and extravagance, those great and commanding talents which were afterwards the admiration and the dread of Europe.

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[1] Clarendon, bk. iii., 31.

[2] Herbert, Edward, Sir, 1591(?)-1657, was appointed Solicitor-General in 1640 and Attorney-General in 1641. For exhibiting articles of impeachment against the five members in the following year he was himself impeached and condemned, but not punished. He joined the King at the commencement of the Civil War and spent his last years in exile.

[3] William Fiennes, first Viscount Say and Sele, 1582-1662, and Robert Greville, second Lord Brooke, 1608-1643, and ten others had in 1632 obtained from the New England Company a district upon the Connecticut River where they founded the colony of that name. Both were staunch upholders of the Puritan and Parliamentary cause.

The cousins took their passage in a vessel which lay in the Thames, and which was bound for North America. They were actually on board, when an order of council appeared, by which the ship was prohibited from sailing.[1] Seven other ships, filled with emigrants, were stopped at the same time.

Hampden and Cromwell remained; and with them remained the Evil Genius of the House of Stuart. The tide of public affairs was even now on the turn. The King had resolved to change the ecclesiastical constitution of Scotland, and to introduce into the public worship of that kingdom ceremonies which the great body of the Scots regarded as popish. This absurd attempt produced, first discontents, then riots, and at length open rebellion. A provisional government was established at Edinburgh, and its authority was obeyed throughout the kingdom. This government raised an army, appointed a general, and summoned an Assembly of the Kirk. The famous instrument called the Covenant was put forth at this time, and was eagerly subscribed by the people.

The beginnings of this formidable insurrection were strangely neglected by the King and his advisers. But towards the close of the year 1638 the danger became pressing. An army was raised; and early in the following spring Charles marched northward at the head of a force sufficient, as it seemed, to reduce the Covenanters to submission.

But Charles acted at this conjuncture as he acted at every important conjuncture throughout his life. After oppressing, threatening, and blustering, he hesitated and failed. He was bold in the wrong place, and timid in the wrong place. He would have shown his wisdom by being afraid before the liturgy was read in St. Giles's church. He put off his fear till he had reached the Scottish border with his troops. Then, after a feeble campaign, he concluded a treaty with the insurgents, and withdrew his army. But the terms of the pacification were not observed. Each party charged the other with foul play. The Scots refused to disarm. The King found great difficulty in reassembling his forces. His late expedition had drained his treasury. The revenues of the next year had been anticipated. At another time, he might have attempted to make up the deficiency by illegal expedients; but such a course would clearly have been dangerous when part of the island was in rebellion. It was necessary to call a Parliament. After eleven years of suffering, the voice of the nation was to be heard once more.

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[1] The story that Hampden and Cromwell had resolved to emigrate to North America and were stopped when actually on board is now discredited.

In April, 1640, the Parliament met; and the King had another chance of conciliating his people. The new House of Commons was, beyond all comparison, the least refractory House of Commons that had been known for many years. Indeed, we have never been able to understand how, after so long a period of misgovernment, the representatives of the nation should have shown so moderate and so loyal a disposition. Clarendon speaks with admiration of their dutiful temper. "The House, generally," says he, "was exceedingly disposed to please the King, and to do him service." "It could never be hoped," he observes elsewhere, "that more sober or dispassionate men would ever meet together in that place, or fewer who brought ill purposes with them."[1]

In this Parliament Hampden took his seat as member for Buckinghamshire, and thenceforward, till the day of his death, gave himself up, with scarcely any intermission, to public affairs. He took lodgings in Gray's Inn Lane, near the house occupied by Pym,[2] with whom he lived in habits of the closest intimacy. He was now decidedly the most popular man in England. The Opposition looked to him as their leader, and the servants of the King treated him with marked respect.

Charles requested the Parliament to vote an immediate supply, and pledged his word that, if they would gratify him in this request, he would afterwards give them time to represent their grievances to him. The grievances under which the nation suffered were so serious, and the royal word had been so shamefully violated, that the Commons could hardly be expected to comply with this request. During the first week of the session, the minutes of the proceedings against Hampden were laid on the table by Oliver St. John, and a committee reported that the case was matter of grievance. The King sent a message to the Commons, offering, if they would vote him twelve subsidies, to give up the prerogative of ship-money. Many years before, he had received five subsidies in consideration of his assent to the Petition of Right. By assenting to that petition, he had given up the right of levying ship-money, if he ever possessed it. How he had observed the promises made to his third Parliament, all England knew ; and it was not strange that the Commons should be somewhat unwilling to buy from him, over and over again, their own ancient and undoubted inheritance.

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[1] Clarendon, bk. ii., 77.

[2] John Pym, 1584-1643, first entered the House of Commons in 1614. He distinguished himself in the Parliament which passed the Petition of Right and acted as a leader of the popular party both in the Short and in the Long Parliaments. In 1641 he was suggested as Chancellor of the Exchequer.

His message, however, was not unfavourably received. The Commons were ready to give a large supply; but they were not disposed to give it in exchange for a prerogative of which they altogether denied the existence. If they acceded to the proposal of the King, they recognised the legality of the writs of ship-money.

Hampden, who was a greater master of parliamentary tactics than any man of his time, saw that this was the prevailing feeling, and availed himself of it with great dexterity. He moved that the question should be put, "Whether the House would consent to the proposition made by the King, as contained in the message." Hyde interfered, and proposed that the question should be divided; that the sense of the House should be taken merely on the point whether there should be a supply or no supply; and that the manner and the amount should be left for subsequent consideration.

The majority of the House was for granting a supply, but against granting it in the manner proposed by the King. If the House had divided on Hampden's question, the court would have sustained a defeat; if on Hyde's, the court would have gained an apparent victory. Some members called for Hyde's motion, others for Hampden's. In the midst of the uproar, the secretary of state, Sir Harry Vane, rose and stated that the supply would not be accepted unless it were voted according to the tenor of the message. Vane was supported by Herbert, the Solicitor-General. Hyde's motion was therefore no further pressed, and the debate on the general question was adjourned till the next day.

On the next day the King came down to the House of Lords, and dissolved the Parliament with an angry speech. His conduct on this occasion has never been defended by any of his apologists.

Clarendon condemns it severely. "No man," says he, "could imagine what offence the Commons had given."[1] The offence which they had given is plain. They had, indeed, behaved most temperately and most respectfully. But they had shown a disposition to redress wrongs and to vindicate the laws; and this was enough to make them hateful to a king whom no law could bind, and whose whole government was one system of wrong.

The nation received the intelligence of the dissolution with sorrow and indignation. The only persons to whom this event gave pleasure were those few discerning men who thought that the maladies of the state were beyond the reach of gentle remedies. Oliver St. John's joy was too great for concealment. It lighted up his dark and melancholy features, and made him, for the first time, indiscreetly communicative. He told Hyde that things must be worse before they could be better, and that the dissolved Parliament would never have done all that was necessary. St. John, we think, was in the right. No good could then have been done by any Parliament which did not fully understand that no confidence could safely be placed in the King, and that, while he enjoyed more than the shadow of power, the nation would never enjoy more than the shadow of liberty.

As soon as Charles had dismissed the Parliament, he threw several members of the House of Commons into prison. Ship-money was exacted more rigorously than ever; and the Mayor and Sheriffs of London were prosecuted before the Star Chamber for slackness in levying it. Wentworth, it is said, observed, with characteristic insolence and cruelty, that things would never go right till the Aldermen were hanged. Large sums were raised by force on those counties in which the troops were quartered. All the wretched shifts of a beggared exchequer were tried. Forced loans were raised. Great quantities of goods were bought on long credit and sold for ready money. A scheme for debasing the currency was under consideration. At length, in August, the King again marched northward.

The Scots advanced into England to meet him. It is by no means improbable that this bold step was taken by the advice of Hampden, and of those with whom he acted; and this has been made matter of grave accusation against the English Opposition. It is said that to call in the aid of foreigners in a domestic quarrel is the worst of treasons, and that the Puritan leaders, by taking this course, showed that they were regardless of the honour and independence of the nation, and anxious only for the success of their own faction. We are utterly unable to see any distinction between the case of the Scotch invasion in 1640, and the case of the Dutch invasion in 1688; or rather, we see distinctions which are to the advantage of Hampden and his friends. We believe Charles to have been a worse and more dangerous king than his son. The Dutch were strangers to us, the Scots a kindred people speaking the same language, subjects of the same prince, not aliens in the eye of the law. If, indeed, it had been possible that a Scotch army or a Dutch army could have enslaved England, those who persuaded Leslie to cross the Tweed, and those who signed the invitation to the Prince of Orange, would have been traitors to their country. But such a result was out of the question. All that either a Scotch or a Dutch invasion could do was to give the public feeling of England an opportunity to show itself. Both expeditions would have ended in complete and ludicrous discomfiture, had Charles and James been supported by their soldiers and their people.[1] In neither case, therefore, was the independence of England endangered; in both cases her liberties were preserved.

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[1] Clarendon, bk. ii., 77.

The second campaign of Charles against the Scots was short and ignominious. His soldiers, as soon as they saw the enemy, ran away as English soldiers have never run either before or since. It can scarcely be doubted that their flight was the effect, not of cowardice, but of disaffection. The four northern counties of England were occupied by the Scotch army, and the King retired to York.

The game of tyranny was now up. Charles had risked and lost his last stake. It is not easy to retrace the mortifications and humiliations which the tyrant now had to endure, without a feeling of vindictive pleasure. His army was mutinous; his treasury was empty; his people clamoured for a Parliament; addresses and petitions against the government were presented. Strafford was for shooting the petitioners by martial law; but the King could not trust the soldiers. A great council of Peers was called at York; but the King could not trust even the Peers. He struggled, evaded, hesitated, tried every shift, rather than again face the representatives of his injured people. At length no shift was left. He made a truce with the Scots, and summoned a Parliament.

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[1] That the Parliamentary leaders were morally justified in their correspondence with the Scots we may allow; but it was natural that Charles should hold by the letter of the law and regard them as traitors.

The leaders of the popular party had, after the late dissolution, remained in London for the purpose of organizing a scheme of opposition to the court. They now exerted themselves to the utmost. Hampden, in particular, rode from county to county, exhorting the electors to give their votes to men worthy of their confidence. The great majority of the returns was on the side of the Opposition. Hampden was himself chosen member both for Wendover and Buckinghamshire. He made his election to serve for the county.

On the third of November, 1640, a day to be long remembered, met that great Parliament, destined to every extreme of fortune, to empire and to servitude, to glory and to contempt; at one time the sovereign of its sovereign, at another time the servant of its servants. From the first day of meeting the attendance was great; and the aspect of the members was that of men not disposed to do the work negligently. The dissolution of the late Parliament had convinced most of them that half measures would no longer suffice. Clarendon tells us, that "the same men who, six months before, were observed to be of very moderate tempers, and to wish that gentle remedies might be applied, talked now in another dialect both of things and persons; and said that they must now be of another temper than they were the last Parliament."[1] The debt of vengeance was swollen by all the usury which had been accumulating during many years; and payment was made to the full.

This memorable crisis called forth parliamentary abilities such as England had never before seen. Among the most distinguished members of the House of Commons were Falkland, Hyde, Digby, young Harry Vane, Oliver St. John, Denzil Hollis, Nathaniel Fiennes.[2] But two men exercised a paramount influence over the legislature and the country, Pym and Hampden; and by the universal consent of friends and enemies, the first place belonged to Hampden.

On occasions which required set speeches Pym generally took the lead. Hampden very seldom rose till late in a debate. His speaking was of that kind which has, in every age, been held in the highest estimation by English Parliaments, ready, weighty, perspicuous, condensed. His perception of the feelings of the House was exquisite, his temper unalterably placid, his manner eminently courteous and gentlemanlike. "Even with those," says Clarendon, "who were able to preserve themselves from his infusions, and who discerned those opinions to be fixed in him with which they could not comply, he always left the character of an ingenious and conscientious person."[1] His talents for business were as remarkable as his talents for debate. "He was," says Clarendon, "of an industry and vigilance not to be tired out or wearied by the most laborious, and of parts not to be imposed upon by the most subtle and sharp."[2] Yet it was rather to his moral than to his intellectual qualities that he was indebted for the vast influence which he possessed. "When this parliament began,"—we again quote Clarendon,—"the eyes of all men were fixed upon him, as their *patriæ pater*, and the pilot that must steer the vessel through the tempests and rocks which threatened it. And I am persuaded his power and interest at that time were greater to do good or hurt than any man's in the kingdom, or than any man of his rank hath had in any time; for his reputation of honesty was universal, and his affections seemed so publicly guided, that no corrupt or private ends could bias them. . . . He was indeed a very wise man, and of great parts, and possessed with the most absolute spirit of popularity, and the most absolute faculties to govern the people, of any man I ever knew."[3]

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[1] Clarendon, bk. iii., 3.

[2] Nathaniel Fiennes, 1608-1669, second son of Viscount Say and Sele. After distinguishing himself in the House he served in the Parliamentary army and was Governor of Bristol when that city was taken by Rupert in 1643. For making too hasty a surrender he was condemned to death by a council of war, but pardoned. He afterwards sat in Cromwell's Council of State.

It is sufficient to recapitulate shortly the acts of the Long Parliament during its first session. Strafford and Laud were impeached and imprisoned. Strafford was afterwards attainted by Bill, and executed. Lord Keeper Finch fled to Holland, Secretary Windebank to France. All those whom the King had, during the last twelve years, employed for the oppression of his people, from the servile judges who had pronounced in favour of the crown against Hampden, down to the sheriffs who had distrained for ship-money, and the custom-house officers who had levied tonnage and poundage, were summoned to answer for their conduct. The Star Chamber, the High Commission Court, the Council of York, were abolished. Those unfortunate victims of Laud who, after undergoing ignominious exposure and cruel manglings, had been sent to languish in distant prisons, were set at liberty, and conducted through London in triumphant procession. The King was compelled to give the judges patents for life or during good behaviour. He was deprived of those oppressive powers which were the last relics of the old feudal tenures. The Forest Courts and the Stannary Courts were reformed. It was provided that the Parliament then sitting should not be prorogued or dissolved without its own consent, and that a Parliament should be held at least once every three years.

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[1] Clarendon, bk. vii., 83.

[2] *Ibid.*, 84.

[3] *Ibid.*, 82.

Many of these measures Lord Clarendon allows to have been most salutary; and few persons will, in our times, deny that, in the laws passed during this session, the good greatly preponderated over the evil. The abolition of those three hateful courts, the Northern Council, the Star Chamber, and the High Commission, would alone entitle the Long Parliament to the lasting gratitude of Englishmen.

The proceeding against Strafford undoubtedly seems hard to people living in our days. It would probably have seemed merciful and moderate to people living in the sixteenth century. It is curious to compare the trial of Charles's minister with the trial, if it can be so called, of Lord Seymour of Sudeley, in the blessed reign of Edward the Sixth. None of the great reformers of our Church doubted the propriety of passing an act of Parliament for cutting off Lord Seymour's head without a legal conviction. The pious Cranmer voted for that act; the pious Latimer preached for it; the pious Edward returned thanks for it; and all the pious Lords of the council together exhorted their victim to what they were pleased facetiously to call "the quiet and patient suffering of justice."

But it is not necessary to defend the proceedings against Strafford by any such comparison. They are justified, in our opinion, by that which alone justifies capital punishment or any punishment, by that which alone justifies war, by the public danger. That there is a certain amount of public danger which will justify a legislature in sentencing a man to death by retrospective law, few people, we suppose, will deny. Few people, for example, will deny that the French Convention was perfectly justified in placing Robespierre, St. Just, and Couthon under the ban of the law, without a trial. This proceeding differed from the proceeding against Strafford only in being much more rapid and violent. Strafford was fully heard. Robespierre was not suffered to defend himself. Was there, then, in the case of Strafford, a danger sufficient to justify an act of attainder? We believe that there was. We believe that the contest in which the Parliament was engaged against the King was a contest for the security of our property, for the liberty of our persons, for every thing which makes us to differ from the subjects of Don Miguel.[1] We believe that the cause of the Commons was such as justified them in resisting the King, in raising an army, in sending thousands of brave men to kill and to be killed. An act of attainder is surely not more a departure from the ordinary course of law than a civil war. An act of attainder produces much less suffering than a civil war. We are, therefore, unable to discover on what principle it can be maintained that a cause which justifies a civil war will not justify an act of attainder.[2]

Many specious arguments have been urged against the retrospective law by which Strafford was condemned to death. But all these arguments proceed on the supposition that the crisis was an ordinary crisis. The attainder was, in truth, a revolutionary measure. It was part of a system of resistance which oppression had rendered necessary. It is as unjust to judge of the conduct pursued by the Long Parliament towards Strafford on ordinary principles, as it would have been to indict Fairfax for murder because he cut down a cornet at Naseby. From the day on which the Houses met, there was a war waged by them against the King, a war for all that they held dear, a war carried on at first by means of parliamentary forms, at last by physical force ; and, as in the second stage of that war, so in the first, they were entitled to do many things which, in quiet times, would have been culpable.

We must not omit to mention that those who were afterwards the most distinguished ornaments of the King's party supported the bill of attainder. It is almost certain that Hyde voted for it. It is quite certain that Falkland both voted and spoke for it. The opinion of Hampden, as far as it can be collected from a very obscure note of one of his speeches, seems to have been that the proceeding by Bill was unnecessary, and that it would be a better course to obtain judgment on the impeachment.

During this year the Court opened a negotiation with the leaders of the Opposition. The Earl of Bedford was invited to form an administration on popular principles. St. John was made solicitor-general. Hollis was to have been secretary of state, and

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[1] Don Miguel, son of John VI. of Portugal and leader of the reactionary party in that country, usurped the crown in 1828, and governed in the most tyrannical fashion until he was driven out by the Liberals.

[2] A piece of special pleading. If it be lawful to put a man to death by act of attainder whenever it would be allowable to kill him in civil war, it would have been allowable to attaint Falkland because he might innocently be killed as he was killed in fair fight. To justify an act of attainder we must show not merely that the person at whom it is aimed is dangerous, but also that he is a wrong-doer of the worst kind. This, no doubt, the promoters of the bill of attainder against Strafford did believe.

Pym chancellor of the exchequer. The post of tutor to the Prince of Wales was designed for Hampden. The death of the Earl of Bedford prevented this arrangement from being carried into effect; and it may be doubted whether, even if that nobleman's life had been prolonged, Charles would ever have consented to surround himself with counsellors whom he could not but hate and fear.

Lord Clarendon admits that the conduct of Hampden during this year was mild and temperate, that he seemed disposed rather to soothe than to excite the public mind, and that, when violent and unreasonable motions were made by his followers, he generally left the House before the division, lest he should seem to give countenance to their extravagance. His temper was moderate. He sincerely loved peace. He felt also great fear lest too precipitate a movement should produce a reaction. The events which took place early in the next session clearly showed that this fear was not unfounded.

During the autumn the Parliament adjourned for a few weeks. Before the recess, Hampden was despatched to Scotland by the House of Commons, nominally as a commissioner, to obtain security for a debt which the Scots had contracted during the late invasion; but in truth that he might keep watch over the King, who had now repaired to Edinburgh, for the purpose of finally adjusting the points of difference which remained between him and his northern subjects. It was the business of Hampden to dissuade the Covenanters from making their peace with the Court, at the expense of the popular party in England.

While the King was in Scotland, the Irish rebellion broke out. The suddenness and violence of this terrible explosion excited a strange suspicion in the public mind. The Queen was a professed Papist. The King and the Archbishop of Canterbury had not indeed been reconciled to the See of Rome; but they had, while acting towards the Puritan party with the utmost rigour, and speaking of that party with the utmost contempt, shown great tenderness and respect towards the Catholic religion and its professors. In spite of the wishes of successive Parliaments, the Protestant separatists had been cruelly persecuted. And at the same time, in spite of the wishes of those very Parliaments, laws which were in force against the Papists, and which, unjustifiable as they were, suited the temper of that age, had not been carried into execution. The Protestant nonconformists had not yet learned toleration in the school of suffering. They reprobated the partial lenity which the government showed towards idolaters, and, with some show of reason, ascribed to bad motives conduct which, in such a King as Charles, and such a prelate as Laud, could not possibly be ascribed to humanity or to liberality of sentiment. The violent Arminianism of the Archbishop, his childish attachment to ceremonies, his superstitious veneration for altars, vestments, and painted windows, his bigoted zeal for the constitution and the privileges of his order, his known opinions respecting the celibacy of the clergy, had excited great disgust throughout that large party which was every day becoming more and more hostile to Rome, and more and more inclined to the doctrines and the discipline of Geneva. It was believed by many that the Irish rebellion had been secretly encouraged by the Court; and, when the Parliament met again in November, after a short recess, the Puritans were more intractable than ever.

But that which Hampden had feared had come to pass. A reaction had taken place. A large body of moderate and well-meaning men, who had heartily concurred in the strong measures adopted before the recess, were inclined to pause. Their opinion was that, during many years the country had been grievously misgoverned, and that a great reform had been necessary; but that a great reform had been made, that the grievances of the nation had been fully redressed, that sufficient vengeance had been exacted for the past, that sufficient security had been provided for the future, and that it would, therefore, be both ungrateful and unwise to make any further attacks on the royal prerogative. In support of this opinion many plausible arguments have been used. But to all these arguments there is one short answer. The King could not be trusted.[1]

At the head of those who may be called the Constitutional Royalists were Falkland, Hyde, and Culpeper. All these eminent men had, during the former year, been in very decided opposition to the Court. In some of those very proceedings with which their admirers reproach Hampden, they had taken a more decided part than Hampden. They had all been concerned in the impeachment of Strafford. They had all, there is reason to believe, voted for the Bill of Attainder. Certainly none of them voted against it. They had all agreed to the act which made the consent of the Parliament necessary to a dissolution or prorogation. Hyde had been among the most active of those who attacked the Council of York. Falkland had voted for the exclusion of the bishops from the Upper House. They were now inclined to halt in the path of reform, perhaps to retrace a few of their steps.

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[1] See p. 113.

A direct collision soon took place between the two parties into which the House of Commons, lately at almost perfect unity with itself, was now divided. The opponents of the government moved that celebrated address to the King which is known by the name of the Grand Remonstrance. In this address all the oppressive acts of the preceding fifteen years were set forth with great energy of language; and, in conclusion, the King was entreated to employ no ministers in whom the Parliament could not confide.

The debate on the Remonstrance was long and stormy. It commenced at nine in the morning of the twenty-first of November, and lasted till after midnight. The division showed that a great change had taken place in the temper of the House. Though many members had retired from exhaustion, three hundred voted; and the Remonstrance was carried by a majority of only nine. A violent debate followed, on the question whether the minority should be allowed to protest against this decision. The excitement was so great that several members were on the point of proceeding to personal violence. "We had sheathed our swords in each other's bowels," says an eye-witness, "had not the sagacity and great calmness of Mr. Hampden, by a short speech, prevented it."[1] The House did not rise till two in the morning.

The situation of the Puritan leaders was now difficult and full of peril. The small majority which they still had might soon become a minority. Out of doors, their supporters in the higher and middle classes were beginning to fall off. There was a growing opinion that the King had been hardly used. The English are always inclined to side with a weak party which is in the wrong rather than with a strong party which is in the right. This may be seen in all contests, from contests of boxers to contests of faction. Thus it was that a violent reaction took place in favour of Charles the Second against the Whigs in 1681. Thus it was that an equally violent reaction took place in favour of George the Third against the coalition in 1784. A similar reaction was beginning to take place during the second year of the Long Parliament. Some members of the Opposition "had resumed," says Clarendon, "their old resolution of leaving the kingdom."[2] Oliver Cromwell openly declared that he and many others would have emigrated if they had been left in a minority on the question of the Remonstrance.

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[1] Sir Philip Warwick, *Memoirs*, p. 202.

[2] Clarendon, bk. iv., 52.

Charles had now a last chance of regaining the affection of his people. If he could have resolved to give his confidence to the leaders of the moderate party in the House of Commons, and to regulate his proceedings by their advice, he might have been, not, indeed, as he had been, a despot, but the powerful and respected king of a free people. The nation might have enjoyed liberty and repose under a government with Falkland at its head, checked by a constitutional Opposition under the conduct of Hampden.[1] It was not necessary that, in order to accomplish this happy end, the King should sacrifice any part of his lawful prerogative, or submit to any conditions inconsistent with his dignity. It was necessary only that he should abstain from treachery, from violence, from gross breaches of the law. This was all that the nation was then disposed to require of him. And even this was too much.

For a short time he seemed inclined to take a wise and temperate course. He resolved to make Falkland secretary of state, and Culpeper chancellor of the exchequer. He declared his intention of conferring in a short time some important office on Hyde. He assured these three persons that he would do nothing relating to the House of Commons without their joint advice, and that he would communicate all his designs to them in the most unreserved manner. This resolution, had he adhered to it, would have averted many years of blood and mourning. But "in very few days," says Clarendon, "he did fatally swerve from it."[2]

On the third of January, 1642, without giving the slightest hint of his intention to those advisers whom he had solemnly promised to consult, he sent down the attorney-general to impeach Lord Kimbolton, Hampden, Pym, Hollis, and two other members of the House of Commons, at the bar of the Lords, on a charge of High Treason. It is difficult to find in the whole history of England such an instance of tyranny, perfidy, and folly. The most precious and ancient rights of the subject were violated by this act. The only way in which Hampden and Pym could legally be tried for treason at the suit of the King, was by a petty jury on a bill found by a grand jury. The attorney-general had no right to impeach them. The House of Lords had no right to try them.

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[1] One of the many touches which show how Macaulay carried back into the history of the seventeenth century the political ideas of the eighteenth. Neither Falkland nor Hampden probably could have conceived of party government or the cabinet system.

[2] Clarendon, bk. iv., 127.

The Commons refused to surrender their members. The Peers showed no inclination to usurp the unconstitutional jurisdiction which the King attempted to force on them. A contest began, in which violence and weakness were on the one side, law and resolution on the other. Charles sent an officer to seal up the lodgings and trunks of the accused members. The Commons sent their sergeant to break the seals. The tyrant resolved to follow up one outrage by another. In making the charge, he had struck at the institution of juries. In executing the arrest, he struck at the privileges of Parliament. He resolved to go to the House in person with an armed force, and there to seize the leaders of the Opposition, while engaged in the discharge of their parliamentary duties.

What was his purpose? Is it possible to believe that he had no definite purpose, that he took the most important step of his whole reign without having for one moment considered what might be its effects? Is it possible to believe that he went merely for the purpose of making himself a laughing-stock, that he intended, if he had found the accused members, and if they had refused, as it was their right and duty to refuse, the submission which he illegally demanded, to leave the House without bringing them away? If we reject both these suppositions, we must believe, and we certainly do believe, that he went fully determined to carry his unlawful design into effect by violence, and, if necessary, to shed the blood of the chiefs of the Opposition on the very floor of the Parliament House.

Lady Carlisle conveyed intelligence of the design to Pym. The five members had time to withdraw before the arrival of Charles. They left the House as he was entering New Palace Yard. He was accompanied by about two hundred halberdiers of his guard, and by many gentlemen of the Court armed with swords. He walked up Westminster Hall. At the southern end of the Hall his attendants divided to the right and left and formed a lane to the door of the House of Commons. He knocked, entered, darted a look towards the place which Pym usually occupied, and, seeing it empty, walked up to the table. The Speaker fell on his knee. The members rose and uncovered their heads in profound silence, and the King took his seat in the chair. He looked round the House. But the five members were nowhere to be seen. He interrogated the Speaker. The Speaker answered, that he was merely the organ of the House, and had neither eyes to see, nor tongue to speak, but according to their direction. The King muttered a few feeble sentences about his respect for the laws of the realm, and the privileges of Parliament, and retired. As he passed along the benches, several resolute voices called out audibly "Privilege!" He returned to Whitehall with his company of bravoes, who, while he was in the House, had been impatiently waiting in the lobby for the word, cocking their pistols, and crying "Fall on." That night he put forth a proclamation, directing that the ports should be stopped, and that no person should, at his peril, venture to harbour the accused members.

Hampden and his friends had taken refuge in Coleman Street. The city of London was indeed the fastness of public liberty, and was, in those times, a place of at least as much importance as Paris during the French Revolution. The city, properly so called, now consists in a great measure of immense warehouses and counting-houses, which are frequented by traders and their clerks during the day, and left in almost total solitude during the night. It was then closely inhabited by three hundred thousand persons, to whom it was not merely a place of business, but a place of constant residence. This great capital had as complete a civil and military organization as if it had been an independent republic. Each citizen had his company; and the companies, which now seem to exist only for the sake of epicures and of antiquaries, were then formidable brotherhoods, the members of which were almost as closely bound together as the members of a Highland clan. How strong these artificial ties were, the numerous and valuable legacies anciently bequeathed by citizens to their corporations abundantly prove. The municipal offices were filled by the most opulent and respectable merchants of the kingdom. The pomp of the magistracy of the capital was inferior only to that which surrounded the person of the sovereign. The Londoners loved their city with that patriotic love which is found only in small communities, like those of ancient Greece, or like those which arose in Italy during the middle ages. The numbers, the intelligence, the wealth of the citizens, the democratical form of their local government, and their vicinity to the Court and to the Parliament, made them one of the most formidable bodies in the kingdom. Even as soldiers they were not to be despised. In an age in which war is a profession, there is something ludicrous in the idea of battalions composed of apprentices and shopkeepers, and officered by aldermen. But, in the early part of the seventeenth century, there was no standing army in the island; and the militia of the metropolis was not inferior in training to the militia of other places. A city which could furnish many thousands of armed men, abounding in natural courage, and not absolutely untinctured with military discipline, was a formidable auxiliary in times of internal dissension. On several occasions during the civil war, the trainbands of London distinguished themselves highly; and at the battle of Newbury,[1] in particular, they repelled the fiery onset of Rupert, and saved the army of the Parliament from destruction.

The people of this great city had long been thoroughly devoted to the national cause. Many of them had signed a protestation in which they declared their resolution to defend the privileges of Parliament. Their enthusiasm had, indeed, of late begun to cool. But the impeachment of the five members, and the insult offered to the House of Commons, inflamed them to fury. Their houses, their purses, their pikes, were at the command of the representatives of the nation. London was in arms all night. The next day the shops were closed; the streets were filled with immense crowds; the multitude pressed round the King's coach, and insulted him with opprobrious cries. The House of Commons, in the mean time, appointed a committee to sit in the city, for the purpose of inquiring into the circumstances of the late outrage. The members of the committee were welcomed by a deputation of the common council. Merchant Tailors' Hall, Goldsmiths' Hall, and Grocers' Hall, were fitted up for their sittings. A guard of respectable citizens, duly relieved twice a day, was posted at their doors. The sheriffs were charged to watch over the safety of the accused members, and to escort them to and from the committee with every mark of honour.

A violent and sudden revulsion of feeling, both in the House and out of it, was the effect of the late proceedings of the King. The Opposition regained in a few hours all the ascendency which it had lost. The constitutional royalists were filled with shame and sorrow. They saw that they had been cruelly deceived by Charles. They saw that they were, unjustly, but not unreasonably, suspected by the nation. Clarendon distinctly says that they perfectly detested the counsels by which the King had been guided, and were so much displeased and dejected at the unfair manner in which he had treated them that they were inclined to retire from his service. During the debates on the breach of privilege, they preserved a melancholy silence. To this day, the advocates of Charles take care to say as little as they can about his visit to the House of Commons, and, when they cannot avoid mention of it, attribute to infatuation an act which, on any other supposition, they must admit to have been a frightful crime.

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[1] The first battle of Newbury, fought on 20th September, 1643.

The Commons, in a few days, openly defied the King, and ordered the accused members to attend in their places at Westminster and to resume their parliamentary duties. The citizens resolved to bring back the champions of liberty in triumph before the windows of Whitehall. Vast preparations were made both by land and water for this great festival.

The King had remained in his palace, humbled, dismayed, and bewildered, "feeling," says Clarendon, "the trouble and agony which usually attend generous and magnanimous minds upon their having committed errors;"[1] feeling, we should say, the despicable repentance which attends the man who, having attempted to commit a crime, finds that he has only committed a folly. The populace hooted and shouted all day before the gates of the royal residence. The tyrant could not bear to see the triumph of those whom he had destined to the gallows and the quartering-block. On the day preceding that which was fixed for their return, he fled, with a few attendants, from that palace which he was never to see again till he was led through it to the scaffold.

On the eleventh of January, the Thames was covered with boats, and its shores with the gazing multitude. Armed vessels, decorated with streamers, were ranged in two lines from London Bridge to Westminster Hall. The members returned upon the river in a ship manned by sailors who had volunteered their services. The trainbands of the city, under the command of the sheriffs, marched along the Strand, attended by a vast crowd of spectators, to guard the avenues to the House of Commons; and thus, with shouts and loud discharges of ordnance, the accused patriots were brought back by the people whom they had served and for whom they had suffered. The restored members, as soon as they had entered the House, expressed, in the warmest terms, their gratitude to the citizens of London. The sheriffs were warmly thanked by the Speaker in the name of the Commons; and orders were given that a guard selected from the trainbands of the city, should attend daily to watch over the safety of the Parliament.

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[1] Clarendon, bk. iv., 159.

The excitement had not been confined to London. When intelligence of the danger to which Hampden was exposed reached Buckinghamshire, it excited the alarm and indignation of the people. Four thousand freeholders of that county, each of them wearing in his hat a copy of the protestation in favour of the privileges of Parliament, rode up to London to defend the person of their beloved representative. They came in a body to assure Parliament of their full resolution to defend its privileges. Their petition was couched in the strongest terms. "In respect," said they, "of that latter attempt upon the honourable House of Commons, we are now come to offer our service to that end, and resolved, in their just defence, to live and die." [1]

A great struggle was clearly at hand. Hampden had returned to Westminster much changed. His influence had hitherto been exerted rather to restrain than to animate the zeal of his party. But the treachery, the contempt of law, the thirst for blood, which the King had now shown, left no hope of a peaceable adjustment. It was clear that Charles must be either a puppet or a tyrant, that no obligation of law or of honour could bind him, and that the only way to make him harmless was to make him powerless.

The attack which the King had made on the five members was not merely irregular in manner. Even if the charges had been preferred legally, if the Grand Jury of Middlesex had found a true bill, if the accused persons had been arrested under a proper warrant and at a proper time and place, there would still have been in the proceeding enough of perfidy and injustice to vindicate the strongest measures which the Opposition could take. To impeach Pym and Hampden was to impeach the House of Commons. It was notoriously on account of what they had done as members of that House that they were selected as objects of vengeance; and in what they had done as members of that House the majority had concurred. Most of the charges brought against them were common between them and the Parliament. They were accused, indeed, and it may be with reason, of encouraging the Scotch army to invade England. In doing this, they had committed what was, in strictness of law, a high offence, the same offence which Devonshire and Shrewsbury committed in 1688.[1] But the King had promised pardon and oblivion to those who had been the principals in the Scotch insurrection. Did it then consist with his honour to punish the accessaries? He had bestowed marks of his favour on the leading Covenanters. He had given the great seal of Scotland to one chief of the rebels, a marquisate to another, an earldom to Leslie,[2] who had brought the Presbyterian army across the Tweed. On what principle was Hampden to be attainted for advising what Leslie was ennobled for doing? In a court of law, of course, no Englishman could plead an amnesty granted to the Scots. But, though not an illegal, it was surely an inconsistent and a most unkingly course, after pardoning and promoting the heads of the rebellion in one kingdom, to hang, draw, and quarter their accomplices in another.

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[1] Clarendon, bk. iv., 203.

The proceedings of the King against the five members, or rather against that Parliament which had concurred in almost all the acts of the five members, was [*sic*] the cause of the civil war. It was plain that either Charles or the House of Commons must be stripped of all real power in the state. The best course which the Commons could have taken would perhaps have been to depose the King, as their ancestors had deposed Edward the Second and Richard the Second, and as their children afterwards deposed James. Had they done this, had they placed on the throne a prince whose character and whose situation would have been a pledge for his good conduct, they might safely have left to that prince all the old constitutional prerogatives of the Crown, the command of the armies of the state, the power of making peers, the power of appointing ministers, a veto on bills passed by the two Houses. Such a prince, reigning by their choice, would have been under the necessity of acting in conformity with their wishes. But the public mind was not ripe for such a measure. There was no Duke of Lancaster, no Prince of Orange, no great and eminent person, near in blood to the throne, yet attached to the cause of the people. Charles was then to remain King; and it was therefore necessary that he should be king only in name. A William the Third, or a George the First, whose title to the crown was identical with the title of the people to their liberty, might safely be trusted with extensive powers. But new freedom could not exist in safety under the old tyrant. Since he was not to be deprived of the name of king, the only course which was left was to make him a mere trustee, nominally seised of prerogatives of which others had the use, a Grand Lama, a *Roi Fainéant*, a phantom resembling those Dagoberts and Childeberts who wore the badges of royalty, while Ebroin and Charles Martel[1] held the real sovereignty of the state.

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[1] The Earl of Devonshire and the Earl of Shrewsbury signed the memorable letter inviting William of Orange over to England to remedy the misgovernment of James II. The other signatories were the Earl of Danby, Lord Lumley, Compton, Bishop of London, Edward Russell and Henry Sidney.

[2] Alexander Leslie, 1580(?)-1661, had been created Earl of Leven in October 1641.

The conditions which the Parliament propounded were hard, but, we are sure, not harder than those which even the Tories, in the Convention of 1689, would have imposed on James, if it had been resolved that James should continue to be king. The chief condition was that the command of the militia and the conduct of the war in Ireland should be left to the Parliament. On this point was that great issue joined, whereof the two parties put themselves on God and on the sword.

We think, not only that the Commons were justified in demanding for themselves the power to dispose of the military force, but that it would have been absolute insanity in them to leave that force at the disposal of the King. From the very beginning of his reign, it had evidently been his object to govern by an army. His third Parliament had complained, in the Petition of Right, of his fondness for martial law, and of the vexatious manner in which he billeted his soldiers on the people. The wish nearest the heart of Strafford was, as his letters prove, that the revenue might be brought into such a state as would enable the King to keep a standing military establishment. In 1640, Charles had supported an army in the northern counties by lawless exactions. In 1641 he had engaged in an intrigue, the object of which was to bring that army to London for the purpose of overawing the Parliament. His late conduct had proved that, if he were suffered to retain even a small body-guard of his own creatures near his person, the Commons would be in danger of outrage, perhaps of massacre. The Houses were still deliberating under the protection of the militia of London. Could the command of the whole armed force of the realm have been, under these circumstances, safely confided to the King? Would it not have been frenzy in the Parliament to raise and pay an army of fifteen or twenty thousand men for the Irish war, and to give to Charles the absolute control of this army, and the power of selecting, promoting, and dismissing officers at his pleasure? Was it not probable that this army might become, what it is the nature of armies to become, what so many armies formed under much more favourable circumstances have become, what the army of the Roman republic became, what the army of the French republic became, an instrument of despotism? Was it not probable that the soldiers might forget that they were also citizens, and might be ready to serve their general against their country? Was it not certain that, on the very first day on which Charles could venture to revoke his concessions, and to punish his opponents, he would establish an arbitrary government, and exact a bloody revenge?

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[1] The last weak kings of the dynasty of Clovis, the first Frankish dynasty in Gaul. All real power had been withdrawn from them by the Mayor of the Palace, a sort of prime minister. Among the holders of this office Ebroin in the seventh and Charles Martel in the eighth century were pre-eminently powerful.

Our own times furnish a parallel case. Suppose that a revolution should take place in Spain, that the Constitution of Cadiz should be reestablished,[1] that the Cortes should meet again, that the Spanish Prynnes and Burtons, who are now wandering in rags round Leicester Square, should be restored to their country. Ferdinand the Seventh would, in that case, of course repeat all the oaths and promises which he made in 1820, and broke in 1823. But would it not be madness in the Cortes, even if they were to leave him the name of King, to leave him more than the name? Would not all Europe scoff at them, if they were to permit him to assemble a large army for an expedition to America, to model that army at his pleasure, to put it under the command of officers chosen by himself? Should we not say that every member of the Constitutional party who might concur in such a measure would most richly deserve the fate which he would probably meet, the fate of Riego[2] and of the Empecinado?[3] We are not disposed to pay compliments to Ferdinand; nor do we conceive that we pay him any compliment, when we say that, of all sovereigns in history, he seems to us most to resemble, in some very important points, King Charles the First. Like Charles, he is pious after a certain fashion; like Charles, he has made large concessions to his people after a certain fashion. It is well for him that he has had to deal with men who bore very little resemblance to the English Puritans.

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[1] The constitution adopted in 1812 by the Cortes which met at Cadiz when the greater part of Spain was still occupied by the French. It was annulled by Ferdinand VII. in 1814.

[2] Raphael de Riego Y Nunez, 1785-1823, was a Spanish officer who in 1820 raised a revolt in favour of the constitution. The revolt presently spreading, Ferdinand gave way and dissembled so far as to treat Riego very graciously. But when a French army enabled the King to show his real temper, the constitution was suppressed and Riego suffered death as a traitor.

[3] Juan Martin Diez, 1793-1823, better known by his nickname of El Empecinado, one of the most distinguished among the guerilla chiefs who fought against Napoleon, took part in the same rising with Riego and met the same fate.

The Commons would have the power of the sword; the King would not part with it; and nothing remained but to try the chances of war. Charles still had a strong party in the country. His august office, his dignified manners, his solemn protestations that he would for the time to come respect the liberties of his subjects, pity for fallen greatness, fear of violent innovation, secured to him many adherents. He had with him the Church, the Universities, a majority of the nobles and of the old landed gentry. The austerity of the Puritan manners drove most of the gay and dissolute youth of that age to the royal standard. Many good, brave, and moderate men, who disliked his former conduct, and who entertained doubts touching his present sincerity, espoused his cause unwillingly and with many painful misgivings, because, though they dreaded his tyranny much, they dreaded democratic violence more.

On the other side was the great body of the middle orders of England, the merchants, the shopkeepers, the yeomanry, headed by a very large and formidable minority of the peerage and of the landed gentry. The Earl of Essex, a man of respectable abilities and of some military experience, was appointed to the command of the parliamentary army.

Hampden spared neither his fortune nor his person in the cause. He subscribed two thousand pounds to the public service. He took a colonel's commission in the army, and went into Buckinghamshire to raise a regiment of infantry. His neighbours eagerly enlisted under his command. His men were known by their green uniform, and by their standard, which bore on one side the watchward of the Parliament, "God with us," and on the other the device of Hampden, "Vestigia nulla retrorsum." This motto well described the line of conduct which he pursued. No member of his party had been so temperate, while there remained a hope that legal and peaceable measures might save the country. No member of his party showed so much energy and vigour when it became necessary to appeal to arms. He made himself thoroughly master of his military duty, and "performed it," to use the words of Clarendon, "upon all occasions most punctually."[1] The regiment which he had raised and trained was considered as one of the best in the service of the Parliament. He exposed his person in every action, with an intrepidity which made him conspicuous even among thousands of brave men. "He was," says Clarendon, "of a personal courage equal to his best parts; so that he was an enemy not to be wished wherever he might have been made a friend, and as much to be apprehended where he was so, as any man could deserve to be."[1] Though his military career was short, and his military situation subordinate, he fully proved that he possessed the talents of a great general, as well as those of a great statesman.

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[1] Clarendon, bk. vii., 84.

We shall not attempt to give a history of the war. Lord Nugent's account of the military operations is very animated and striking. Our abstract would be dull, and probably unintelligible. There was, in fact, for some time no great and connected system of operations on either side. The war of the two parties was like the war of Arimanes and Oromasdes,[2] neither of whom, according to the Eastern theologians, has any exclusive domain, who are equally omnipresent, who equally pervade all space, who carry on their eternal strife within every particle of matter. There was a petty war in almost every county. A town furnished troops to the Parliament while the manor-house of the neighbouring peer was garrisoned for the King. The combatants were rarely disposed to march far from their own homes. It was reserved for Fairfax and Cromwell to terminate this desultory warfare, by moving one overwhelming force successively against all the scattered fragments of the royal party.

It is a remarkable circumstance that the officers who had studied tactics in what were considered as the best schools, under Vere in the Netherlands, and under Gustavus Adolphus in Germany,[3] displayed far less skill than those commanders who had been bred to peaceful employments, and who never saw even a skirmish till the civil war broke out. An unlearned person might hence be inclined to suspect that the military art is no very profound mystery, that its principles are the principles of plain good sense, and that a quick eye, a cool head, and a stout heart, will do more to make a general than all the diagrams of Jomini.[4] This, however, is certain, that Hampden showed himself a far better officer than Essex, and Cromwell than Leslie.

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[1] Clarendon, bk. vii., 84.

[2] See p. 32.

[3] Horace Vere, Sir, 1565-1635, fought long and gloriously in the war of Dutch independence and the Thirty Years' War. In the latter war many Englishmen and Scotchmen served as volunteers under Gustavus Adolphus, King of Sweden. *Cf.* Scott's *Legend of Montrose.*

[4] Henri Jomini, 1779-1869, a Swiss by birth, first rose to eminence in the Swiss Revolution of 1798 when, in spite of his youth, he was appointed Chief Secretary for

The military errors of Essex were probably in some degree produced by political timidity. He was honestly, but not warmly, attached to the cause of the Parliament; and next to a great defeat he dreaded a great victory. Hampden, on the other hand, was for vigorous and decisive measures. When he drew the sword, as Clarendon has well said, he threw away the scabbard. He had shown that he knew better than any public man of his time how to value and how to practise moderation. But he knew that the essence of war is violence, and that moderation in war is imbecility. On several occasions, particularly during the operations in the neighbourhood of Brentford, he remonstrated earnestly with Essex.[1] Wherever he commanded separately, the boldness and rapidity of his movements presented a striking contrast to the sluggishness of his superior.

In the Parliament he possessed boundless influence. His employments towards the close of 1642 have been described by Denham in some lines which, though intended to be sarcastic, convey in truth the highest eulogy. Hampden is described in this satire as perpetually passing and repassing between the military station at Windsor and the House of Commons at Westminster, as overawing the general, and as giving law to that Parliament which knew no other law.[2] It was at this time that he organised that celebrated association of counties to which his party was principally indebted for its victory over the King.[3]

War to the new Government. A few years later he took service under Napoleon, whom he left in 1813 to join the Russian service. Although a good soldier it is by his works of military history and criticism that he is now remembered. His *Principes de la Stratégie*, *Histoire des Campagnes de la Révolution* and *Vie Politique et Militaire de Napoléon* are still consulted. The truth is, not that technical training is of little value to the soldier, but that natural ability and singleness of purpose are even more valuable. The real reason why Essex was so inefficient is explained in the next paragraph.

[1] After gaining an advantage over Essex in the battle of Edgehill, 23rd October, 1642, Charles, who had the start of his opponent, marched on London and gained another success at Brentford.

[2] Macaulay refers to Denham's lines entitled "A Speech against Peace at the Close Committee":—

> "Have I so often passed between
> Windsor and Westminster, unseen,
> And did myself divide,
> To keep his excellence in awe
> And give the Parliament the law?
> For they knew none beside."

[3] Macaulay refers to the Midland Association of counties, including Buckingham, formed at the close of 1642. But it was the Eastern Association, formed at the same time, which had so large a part in the success of the Parliament.

In the early part of 1643, the shires lying in the neighbourhood of London, which were devoted to the cause of the Parliament, were incessantly annoyed by Rupert and his cavalry. Essex had extended his lines so far that almost every point was vulnerable. The young prince, who, though not a great general, was an active and enterprising partisan, frequently surprised posts, burned villages, swept away cattle, and was again at Oxford before a force sufficient to encounter him could be assembled.

The languid proceedings of Essex were loudly condemned by the troops. All the ardent and daring spirits in the parliamentary party were eager to have Hampden at their head. Had his life been prolonged, there is every reason to believe that the supreme command would have been intrusted to him. But it was decreed that, at this conjuncture, England should lose the only man who united perfect disinterestedness to eminent talents, the only man who, being capable of gaining the victory for her, was incapable of abusing that victory when gained.

In the evening of the seventeenth of June, Rupert darted out of Oxford with his cavalry on a predatory expedition. At three in the morning of the following day, he attacked and dispersed a few parliamentary soldiers who lay at Postcombe. He then flew to Chinnor, burned the village, killed or took all the troops who were quartered there, and prepared to hurry back with his booty and his prisoners to Oxford.

Hampden had, on the preceding day, strongly represented to Essex the danger to which this part of the line was exposed. As soon as he received intelligence of Rupert's incursion, he sent off a horseman with a message to the General. The cavaliers, he said, could return only by Chiselhampton Bridge. A force ought to be instantly despatched in that direction for the purpose of intercepting them. In the mean time, he resolved to set out with all the cavalry that he could muster, for the purpose of impeding the march of the enemy till Essex could take measures for cutting off their retreat. A considerable body of horse and dragoons volunteered to follow him. He was not their commander. He did not even belong to their branch of the service. But "he was," says Lord Clarendon, "second to none but the General himself in the observance and application of all men." [1] On the field of Chalgrove he came up with Rupert. A fierce skirmish ensued. In the first charge Hampden was struck in the shoulder by two bullets, which broke the bone, and lodged in his body. The troops of the Parliament lost heart and gave way. Rupert, after pursuing them for a short time, hastened to cross the bridge, and made his retreat unmolested to Oxford.

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[1] Clarendon, bk. vii., 81.

Hampden, with his head drooping, and his hands leaning on his horse's neck, moved feebly out of the battle. The mansion which had been inhabited by his father-in-law, and from which in his youth he had carried home his bride Elizabeth, was in sight. There still remains an affecting tradition that he looked for a moment towards that beloved house, and made an effort to go thither to die. But the enemy lay in that direction. He turned his horse towards Thame, where he arrived almost fainting with agony. The surgeons dressed his wounds. But there was no hope. The pain which he suffered was most excruciating. But he endured it with admirable firmness and resignation. His first care was for his country. He wrote from his bed several letters to London concerning public affairs, and sent a last pressing message to the head-quarters, recommending that the dispersed forces should be concentrated. When his public duties were performed, he calmly prepared himself to die. He was attended by a clergyman of the Church of England, with whom he had lived in habits of intimacy, and by the chaplain of the Buckinghamshire Greencoats, Dr. Spurton, whom Baxter describes as a famous and excellent divine.

A short time before Hampden's death the sacrament was administered to him. He declared that though he disliked the government of the Church of England, he yet agreed with that Church as to all essential matters of doctrine. His intellect remained unclouded. When all was nearly over, he lay murmuring faint prayers for himself, and for the cause in which he died. "Lord Jesus," he exclaimed in the moment of the last agony, "receive my soul. O Lord, save my country. O Lord, be merciful to——." In that broken ejaculation passed away his noble and fearless spirit.[1]

He was buried in the parish church of Hampden. His soldiers, bareheaded, with reversed arms and muffled drums and colours, escorted his body to the grave, singing, as they marched, that lofty and melancholy psalm in which the fragility of human life is contrasted with the immutability of Him to whom a thousand years are as yesterday when it is passed, and as a watch in the night.[1]

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[1] This account of Hampden's last moments is untrustworthy. It was taken by Nugent from "A True and Faithful Narrative of the Death of Mr. Hampden" which appeared, without the name of the person who professed to have found it, in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1815.

The news of Hampden's death produced as great a consternation in his party, according to Clarendon, as if their whole army had been cut off. The journals of the time amply prove that the Parliament and all its friends were filled with grief and dismay. Lord Nugent has quoted a remarkable passage from the next Weekly Intelligencer. "The loss of Colonel Hampden goeth near the heart of every man that loves the good of his king and country, and makes some conceive little content to be at the army now that he is gone. The memory of this deceased colonel is such, that in no age to come but it will more and more be had in honour and esteem; a man so religious, and of that prudence, judgment, temper, valour, and integrity, that he hath left few his like behind."

He had indeed left none his like behind him. There still remained, indeed, in his party, many acute intellects, many eloquent tongues, many brave and honest hearts. There still remained a rugged and clownish soldier, half fanatic, half buffoon, whose talents, discerned as yet only by one penetrating eye, were equal to all the highest duties of the soldier and the prince. But in Hampden, and in Hampden alone, were united all the qualities which, at such a crisis, were necessary to save the state, the valour and energy of Cromwell, the discernment and eloquence of Vane, the humanity and moderation of Manchester, the stern integrity of Hale, the ardent public spirit of Sydney. Others might possess the qualities which were necessary to save the popular party in the crisis of danger; he alone had both the power and the inclination to restrain its excesses in the hour of triumph. Others could conquer; he alone could reconcile. A heart as bold as his brought up the cuirassiers who turned the tide of battle on Marston Moor. As skilful an eye as his watched the Scotch army descending from the heights over Dunbar. But it was when to the sullen tyranny of Laud and Charles had succeeded the fierce conflict of sects and factions, ambitious of ascendency and burning for revenge, it was when the vices and ignorance which the old tyranny had generated threatened the new freedom with destruction, that England missed the sobriety, the self-command, the perfect soundness of judgment, the perfect rectitude of intention, to which the history of revolutions furnishes no parallel, or furnishes a parallel in Washington alone.

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[1] Ps. xc.

BURLEIGH AND HIS TIMES

April, 1832

NOTE ON THE ESSAY

IF the essay on Burleigh is conspicuously inferior to either of the essays on William Pitt, "a strange, rambling performance," as Macaulay himself termed it, the reason may be found in the writer's imperfect sympathy with his subject and in his still more imperfect knowledge of his materials. Macaulay seldom turned to the history of the English Reformation without the wish to contradict Southey on the merits of Queen Elizabeth, or to the politics of the sixteenth century without the wish to contradict Hume who had represented the Stuarts as suffering simply for having governed according to the tradition of the Tudors. In this essay he gives too much time and trouble to showing that the Tudor sovereigns were not really despots and that Elizabeth might with advantage have tolerated the Roman Catholics. Burleigh did not interest him and is therefore dismissed as curtly as possible. Some of his remarks upon Burleigh, indeed, show his strong good sense and forestall the judgment of Burleigh's latest and most competent biographer. Burleigh, he observes, "paid great attention to the interests of the state and great attention also to the interests of his own family." "The first cause he served," remarks Major Hume, "was that of the state, the second was William Cecil and his house." Burleigh, according to Macaulay, never deserted his friends till it was very inconvenient to stand by them. "He was not generous or magnanimous," Major Hume tells us, "in his treatment of others when his own interests were at stake; and the sacrifice of Davison would probably appear to him a very small price to pay for helping England out of a difficult position and maintaining his own favour."

Equally acute is Macaulay's explanation of the popularity and success of Elizabeth as contrasted with the Stuarts. "She did not treat the nation as an adverse party, as a party which had an interest opposed to hers, as a party to which she was to grant as few advantages as possible, and from which she was to extort as much money as possible." But Macaulay has done meagre justice to the achievement of the Queen and her minister. England, when Cecil became Secretary, was hardly a second-rate kingdom. England, when Cecil died, held the balance of Europe. Walpole, Pelham and Liverpool, whom Macaulay compares with Burleigh, came into office when England was at the height of power and had only to keep her there. The contest with Napoleon was in some respects as hazardous as the contest with Philip. But it was waged far more on the field and far less in the cabinet. Soundness of judgment in the degree in which it was possessed by Burleigh is a kind of genius. Indeed no other kind of genius is so indispensable in a ruler. Had Macaulay been less exclusively partial to Parliamentary government he might have appreciated more liberally so great a master of state-craft. Even so he scarcely had the knowledge of Burleigh's policy requisite to passing a final judgment, for most of the evidence upon which our estimate of Burleigh is based was then buried in enormous masses of unpublished and unsifted papers. Macaulay was also unfortunate in having to work upon so dull and diluted a book as that of Dr. Nares. Major Hume's *Life* has set before our eyes the real Lord Burleigh.

BURLEIGH AND HIS TIMES

Memoirs of the Life and Administration of the Right Honourable William Cecil Lord Burghley, Secretary of State in the Reign of King Edward the Sixth, and Lord High Treasurer of England in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth. Containing an Historical View of the Times in which he lived, and of the many eminent and illustrious Persons with whom he was connected; with Extracts from his Private and Official Correspondence and other Papers, now first published from the Originals. By the Reverend EDWARD NARES, D.D., Regius Professor of Modern History in the University of Oxford. 3 vols. 4to. London: 1828, 1832.

THE work of Dr. Nares has filled us with astonishment similar to that which Captain Lemuel Gulliver felt when first he landed in Brobdingnag, and saw corn as high as the oaks in the New Forest, thimbles as large as buckets, and wrens of the bulk of turkeys. The whole book, and every component part of it, is on a gigantic scale. The title is as long as an ordinary preface: the prefatory matter would furnish out an ordinary book; and the book contains as much reading as an ordinary library. We cannot sum up the merits of the stupendous mass of paper which lies before us better than by saying that it consists of about two thousand closely printed quarto pages, that it occupies fifteen hundred inches cubic measure, and that it weighs sixty pounds avoirdupois. Such a book might, before the deluge, have been considered as light reading by Hilpa and Shalum.[1] But unhappily the life of man is now threescore years and ten; and we cannot but think it somewhat unfair in Dr. Nares to demand from us so large a portion of so short an existence.

Compared with the labour of reading through these volumes, all other labour, the labour of thieves on the treadmill, of children in factories, of negroes in sugar plantations, is an agreeable recreation. There was, it is said, a criminal in Italy, who was suffered to make his choice between Guicciardini[2] and the galleys. He chose the history. But the war of Pisa was too much for him. He changed his mind, and went to the oar. Guicciardini, though certainly not the most amusing of writers, is a Herodotus or a Froissart, when compared with Dr. Nares. It is not merely in bulk, but in specific gravity also, that these memoirs exceed all other human compositions. On every subject which the Professor discusses, he produces three times as many pages as another man; and one of his pages is as tedious as another man's three. His book is swelled to its vast dimensions by endless repetitions, by episodes which have nothing to do with the main action, by quotations from books which are in every circulating library, and by reflections which, when they happen to be just, are so obvious that they must necessarily occur to the mind of every reader. He employs more words in expounding and defending a truism than any other writer would employ in supporting a paradox. Of the rules of historical perspective, he has not the faintest notion. There is neither foreground nor background in his delineation. The wars of Charles the Fifth in Germany are detailed at almost as much length as in Robertson's life of that prince. The troubles of Scotland are related as fully as in M'Crie's Life of John Knox. It would be most unjust to deny that Dr. Nares is a man of great industry and research; but he is so utterly incompetent to arrange the materials which he has collected that he might as well have left them in their original repositories.

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[1] *Spectator*, No. 584.

[2] Francesco Guicciardini, 1484-1540, a Florentine, distinguished both in politics and in literature, wrote the history of Italy from 1494 to 1534. By the war of Pisa

Neither the facts which Dr. Nares has discovered, nor the arguments which he urges, will, we apprehend, materially alter the opinion generally entertained by judicious readers of history concerning his hero. Lord Burleigh can hardly be called a great man. He was not one of those whose genius and energy change the fate of empires. He was by nature and habit one of those who follow, not one of those who lead. Nothing that is recorded, either of his words or of his actions, indicates intellectual or moral elevation. But his talents, though not brilliant, were of an eminently useful kind; and his principles, though not inflexible, were not more relaxed than those of his associates and competitors. He had a cool temper, a sound judgment, great powers of application, and a constant eye to the main chance. In his youth he was, it seems, fond of practical jokes. Yet even out of these he contrived to extract some pecuniary profit.

Macaulay means the struggle for freedom which the revolted Pisans maintained against the Florentines through fifteen years of petty sieges, raids and combats.

When he was studying the law at Gray's Inn,[1] he lost all his furniture and books at the gaming table to one of his friends. He accordingly bored a hole in the wall which separated his chambers from those of his associate, and at midnight bellowed through this passage threats of damnation and calls to repentance in the ears of the victorious gambler, who lay sweating with fear all night, and refunded his winnings on his knees next day. "Many other the like merry jests," says his old biographer, "I have heard him tell, too long to be here noted."[2] To the last, Burleigh was somewhat jocose; and some of his sportive sayings have been recorded by Bacon.[3] They show much more shrewdness than generosity, and are, indeed, neatly expressed reasons for exacting money rigorously, and for keeping it carefully. It must, however, be acknowledged that he was rigorous and careful for the public advantage as well as for his own. To extol his moral character as Dr. Nares has extolled it is absurd. It would be equally absurd to represent him as a corrupt, rapacious, and bad-hearted man. He paid great attention to the interests of the state, and great attention also to the interest of his own family. He never deserted his friends till it was very inconvenient to stand by them, was an excellent Protestant when it was not very advantageous to be a Papist, recommended a tolerant policy to his mistress as strongly as he could recommend it without hazarding her favour, never put to the rack any person from whom it did not seem probable that useful information might be derived, and was so moderate in his desires that he left only three hundred distinct landed estates, though he might, as his honest servant[4] assures us, have left much more, "if he would have taken money out of the Exchequer for his own use, as many Treasurers have done."

Burleigh, like the old Marquess of Winchester,[5] who preceded him in the custody of the White Staff, was of the willow, and not of the oak. He first rose into notice by defending the supremacy of Henry the Eighth.[1] He was subsequently favoured and promoted by the Duke of Somerset.[2] He not only contrived to escape unhurt when his patron fell, but became an important member of the administration of Northumberland. Dr. Nares assures us over and over again that there could have been nothing base in Cecil's conduct on this occasion; for, says he, Cecil continued to stand well with Cranmer. This, we confess, hardly satisfies us. We are much of the mind of Falstaff's tailor. We must have better assurance for Sir John than Bardolph's.[3] We like not the security.

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[1] Cecil was entered a student of Gray's Inn in May, 1541. His latest biographer thinks that he did not study the law very seriously.

[2] A faithful attendant of Cecil during the last twenty-five years of his life, who drew up a narrative of his career published by Peck in his *Desiderata Curiosa* and by Collins in 1732.

[3] On one occasion Burleigh said to Queen Elizabeth: "Madam, you do well to let suitors stay, for I shall tell you, *Bis dat qui cito dat;* if you grant them speedily, they will come again the sooner" (Bacon, *Apophthegms*).

[4] The biographer above quoted.

[5] William Paulet, first Marquess of Winchester, 1485-1572, served the Crown in various capacities, finally becoming Treasurer, an office which he held from 1550 until his death. When asked why he had so long thriven amid the fall of so many eminent persons, he answered: "Quia ortus sum a salice, non ex quercu."

Through the whole course of that miserable intrigue which was carried on round the dying bed of Edward the Sixth, Cecil so bemeaned himself as to avoid, first, the displeasure of Northumberland, and afterwards the displeasure of Mary. He was prudently unwilling to put his hand to the instrument which changed the course of the succession. But the furious Dudley was master of the palace. Cecil, therefore, according to his own account, excused himself from signing as a party, but consented to sign as a witness.[4] It is not easy to describe his dexterous conduct at this most perplexing crisis, in language more appropriate than that which is employed by old Fuller. "His hand wrote it as secretary of state," says that quaint writer; "but his heart consented not thereto. Yea, he openly opposed it; though at last yielding to the greatness of Northumberland, in an age when it was present drowning not to swim with the stream. But as the philosopher tells us, that though the planets be whirled about daily from east to west, by the motion of the *primum mobile*, yet have they also a contrary proper motion of their own from west to east, which they slowly, though surely, move at their leisure; so Cecil had secret counter-endeavours against the strain of the court herein, and privately advanced his rightful intentions against the foresaid duke's ambition."[5]

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[1] The domestic biographer says that Cecil first attracted Henry's notice by his skill in maintaining the doctrine of the royal supremacy against two chaplains of the Irish chief, O'Neil, whom he met in the presence chamber.

[2] In 1547 Somerset appointed Cecil his Master of Requests, and in 1548 his Secretary. In 1550, after Somerset's fall, Northumberland made Cecil Secretary of State.

[3] "Henry IV.," pt. ii., act i., scene 2.

[4] This was afterwards stated by Roger Alford, a confidential servant of Cecil, on Cecil's authority; but according to Major Hume the paper itself disproves the statement.

[5] *The Holy State*, ch. vi.; *Life of Lord Burleigh* by Thomas Fuller, D.D., the well-known author of *The Worthies*.

This was undoubtedly the most perilous conjuncture of Cecil's life. Wherever there was a safe course, he was safe. But here every course was full of danger. His situation rendered it impossible for him to be neutral. If he acted on either side, if he refused to act at all, he ran a fearful risk. He saw all the difficulties of his position. He sent his money and plate out of London, made over his estates to his son, and carried arms about his person. His best arms, however, were his sagacity and his self-command. The plot in which he had been an unwilling accomplice ended, as it was natural that so odious and absurd a plot should end, in the ruin of its contrivers. In the mean time, Cecil quietly extricated himself, and, having been successively patronised by Henry, by Somerset, and by Northumberland, continued to flourish under the protection of Mary.[1]

He had no aspirations after the crown of martyrdom. He confessed himself, therefore, with great decorum, heard mass in Wimbledon Church at Easter, and, for the better ordering of his spiritual concerns, took a priest into his house. Dr. Nares, whose simplicity passes that of any casuist with whom we are acquainted, vindicates his hero by assuring us that this was not superstition, but pure unmixed hypocrisy. "That he did in some manner conform, we shall not be able, in the face of existing documents, to deny; while we feel in our own minds abundantly satisfied, that, during this very trying reign, he never abandoned the prospect of another revolution in favour of Protestantism."[2] In another place, the Doctor tells us, that Cecil went to mass "with no idolatrous intention." Nobody, we believe, ever accused him of idolatrous intentions. The very ground of the charge against him is that he had no idolatrous intentions. We never should have blamed him if he had really gone to Wimbledon Church, with the feelings of a good Catholic, to worship the host. Dr. Nares speaks in several places with just severity of the sophistry of the Jesuits, and with just admiration of the incomparable letters of Pascal. It is somewhat strange, therefore, that he should adopt, to the full extent, the jesuitical doctrine of the direction of intentions.

We do not blame Cecil for not choosing to be burned. The deep stain upon his memory is that, for differences of opinion for which he would risk nothing himself, he, in the day of his power, took away without scruple the lives of others. One of the excuses suggested in these Memoirs for his conforming, during the reign of Mary, to the Church of Rome, is that he may have been of the same mind with those German Protestants who were called Adiaphorists, and who considered the popish rites as matters indifferent. Melancthon[1] was one of these moderate persons, and "appears," says Dr. Nares, "to have gone greater lengths than any imputed to Lord Burleigh." We should have thought this not only an excuse, but a complete vindication, if Cecil had been an Adiaphorist for the benefit of others as well as for his own. If the popish rites were matters of so little moment that a good Protestant might lawfully practise them for his safety, how could it be just or humane that a Papist should be hanged, drawn, and quartered, for practising them from a sense of duty? Unhappily these non-essentials soon became matters of life and death. Just at the very time at which Cecil attained the highest point of power and favour, an Act of Parliament was passed by which the penalties of high treason were denounced against persons who should do in sincerity what he had done from cowardice.[2]

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[1] Major Hume quotes at length a curious paper written by Cecil to clear himself after Mary's accession, and entitled *A Brief Note of My Submission and of My Doings*, which fully bears out Macaulay's estimate of his flexible and cautious character (Hume, p. 40).

[2] Nares, vol. i., p. 660.

Early in the reign of Mary, Cecil was employed in a mission scarcely consistent with the character of a zealous Protestant. He was sent to escort the Papal Legate, Cardinal Pole, from Brussels to London. That great body of moderate persons who cared more for the quiet of the realm than for the controverted points which were in issue between the Churches seem to have placed their chief hope in the wisdom and humanity of the gentle Cardinal. Cecil, it is clear, cultivated the friendship of Pole with great assiduity, and received great advantage from the Legate's protection.

But the best protection of Cecil, during the gloomy and disastrous reign of Mary, was that which he derived from his own prudence and from his own temper, a prudence which could never be lulled into carelessness, a temper which could never be irritated into rashness. The Papists could find no occasion against him. Yet he did not lose the esteem even of those sterner Protestants who had preferred exile to recantation. He attached himself to the persecuted heiress of the throne, and entitled himself to her gratitude and confidence. Yet he continued to receive marks of favour from the Queen. In the House of Commons, he put himself at the head of the party opposed to the Court. Yet, so guarded was his language that, even when some of those who acted with him were imprisoned by the Privy Council, he escaped with impunity.

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[1] Philip Melancthon, 1497-1560, next to Luther the most distinguished of the German Reformers and author of the *Augsburg Confession* of 1530, was willing to make large concessions to the Church of Rome for the sake of peace and unity.

[2] The statute 13 Elizabeth, ch. ii., entitled An Act against the bringing in and putting in Execution of Bulls and other Instruments from the See of Rome, made it treason for any person to be reconciled with the Church of Rome (1571).

At length Mary died: Elizabeth succeeded; and Cecil rose at once to greatness. He was sworn in Privy-councillor and Secretary of State to the new sovereign before he left her prison of Hatfield; and he continued to serve her during forty years, without intermission, in the highest employments. His abilities were precisely those which keep men long in power. He belonged to the class of the Walpoles, the Pelhams, and the Liverpools, not to that of the St. Johns, the Carterets, the Chathams, and the Cannings. If he had been a man of original genius and of an enterprising spirit, it would have been scarcely possible for him to keep his power or even his head. There was not room in one government for an Elizabeth and a Richelieu. What the haughty daughter of Henry needed, was a moderate, cautious, flexible minister, skilled in the details of business, competent to advise, but not aspiring to command. And such a minister she found in Burleigh. No arts could shake the confidence which she reposed in her old and trusty servant. The courtly graces of Leicester, the brilliant talents and accomplishments of Essex, touched the fancy, perhaps the heart, of the woman; but no rival could deprive the Treasurer of the place which he possessed in the favour of the Queen. She sometimes chid him sharply; but he was the man whom she delighted to honour. For Burleigh, she forgot her usual parsimony both of wealth and of dignities. For Burleigh, she relaxed that severe etiquette to which she was unreasonably attached. Every other person to whom she addressed her speech, or on whom the glance of her eagle eye fell, instantly sank on his knee. For Burleigh alone, a chair was set in her presence; and there the old minister, by birth only a plain Lincolnshire esquire, took his ease, while the haughty heirs of the Fitzalans and the De Veres humbled themselves to the dust around him. At length, having survived all his early coadjutors and rivals, he died full of years and honours. His royal mistress visited him on his death-bed, and cheered him with assurances of her affection and esteem; and his power passed, with little diminution, to a son who inherited his abilities, and whose mind had been formed by his counsels.

The life of Burleigh was commensurate with one of the most important periods in the history of the world. It exactly measures the time during which the House of Austria held decided superiority and aspired to universal dominion. In the year in which Burleigh was born, Charles the Fifth obtained the imperial crown.[1] In the year in which Burleigh died, the vast designs which had, during near a century, kept Europe in constant agitation, were buried in the same grave with the proud and sullen Philip.[2]

The life of Burleigh was commensurate also with the period during which a great moral revolution was effected, a revolution the consequences of which were felt, not only in the cabinets of princes, but at half the firesides in Christendom. He was born when the great religious schism was just commencing. He lived to see that schism complete, and to see a line of demarcation, which, since his death, has been very little altered, strongly drawn between Protestant and Catholic Europe.

The only event of modern times which can be properly compared with the Reformation is the French Revolution, or, to speak more accurately, that great revolution of political feeling which took place in almost every part of the civilised world during the eighteenth century, and which obtained in France its most terrible and signal triumph. Each of these memorable events may be described as a rising up of the human reason against a Caste.[3] The one was a struggle of the laity against the clergy for intellectual liberty; the other was a struggle of the people against princes and nobles for political liberty. In both cases, the spirit of innovation was at first encouraged by the class to which it was likely to be most prejudicial. It was under the patronage of Frederic, of Catherine, of Joseph, and of the grandees of France, that the philosophy which afterwards threatened all the thrones and aristocracies of Europe with destruction first became formidable. The ardour with which men betook themselves to liberal studies, at the close of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth century, was zealously encouraged by the heads of that very church to which liberal studies were destined to be fatal. In both cases, when the explosion came, it came with a violence which appalled and disgusted many of those who had previously been distinguished by the freedom of their opinions. The violence of the democratic party in France made Burke a Tory and Alfieri a courtier. The violence of the chiefs of the German schism made Erasmus[1] a defender of abuses, and turned the author of Utopia into a persecutor.[2] In both cases, the convulsion which had overthrown deeply seated errors, shook all the principles on which society rests to their very foundations. The minds of men were unsettled. It seemed for a time that all order and morality were about to perish with the prejudices with which they had been long and intimately associated. Frightful cruelties were committed. Immense masses of property were confiscated. Every part of Europe swarmed with exiles. In moody and turbulent spirits zeal soured into malignity, or foamed into madness. From the political agitation of the eighteenth century sprang the Jacobins. From the religious agitation of the sixteenth century sprang the Anabaptists. The partisans of Robespierre robbed and murdered in the name of fraternity and equality. The followers of Kniperdoling robbed and murdered in the name of Christian liberty. The feeling of patriotism was, in many parts of Europe, almost wholly extinguished. All the old maxims of foreign policy were changed. Physical boundaries were superseded by moral boundaries. Nations made war on each other with new arms, with arms which no fortifications, however strong by nature or by art, could resist, with arms before which rivers parted like the Jordan, and ramparts fell down like the walls of Jericho. The great masters of fleets and armies were often reduced to confess, like Milton's warlike angel, how hard they found it

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[1] Charles was elected Emperor in 1519; but Cecil was born in 1520.

[2] The year 1598.

[3] The Roman clergy were not properly a caste, seeing that any one might become a clergyman and no clergyman could marry. Nor was the French Revolution so much a political as a social revolution. Macaulay's Whiggish and insular mind always tended to lay too much stress on its political aspect.

> "To exclude
> Spiritual substance with corporeal bar."[3]

Europe was divided, as Greece had been divided during the period concerning which Thucydides wrote. The conflict was not, as it is in ordinary times, between state and state, but between two omnipresent factions, each of which was in some places dominant and in other places oppressed, but which, openly or covertly, carried on their strife in the bosom of every society. No man asked whether another belonged to the same country with himself, but whether he belonged to the same sect. Party-spirit seemed to justify and consecrate acts which, in any other times, would have been considered as the foulest of treasons. The French emigrant saw nothing disgraceful in bringing Austrian and Prussian hussars to Paris. The Irish or Italian democrat saw no impropriety in serving the French Directory against his own native government. So, in the sixteenth century, the fury of theological factions suspended all national animosities and jealousies. The Spaniards were invited into France by the League; the English were invited into France by the Huguenots.

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[1] Desiderius Erasmus, 1466-1536, a native of Rotterdam, one of the most accomplished and versatile minds of the age of the Renaissance, a scholar and a man of the world, a theologian and a man of letters, saw and condemned the superstition of the age and the corruption of the clergy, but shrank from the violence and dogmatism which the reformers shared with their enemies. He can be called a defender of abuses only in the sense that he disliked Luther's way of amending them. At heart he was far more of a rationalist than Luther.

[2] Sir Thomas More, 1478-1535, also a scholar and a man of letters and Chancellor of England from 1529 to 1532, had implicitly condemned persecution in his *Utopia*. But he, too, was alarmed by the vehemence of the reformers and did not refrain from persecuting them when he had power.

[3] *Paradise Lost*, bk. iv., lines 584-585.

We by no means intend to underrate or to palliate the crimes and excesses which, during the last generation, were produced by the spirit of democracy. But, when we hear men zealous for the Protestant religion, constantly represent the French Revolution as radically and essentially evil on account of those crimes and excesses, we cannot but remember that the deliverance of our ancestors from the house of their spiritual bondage was effected "by plagues and by signs, by wonders and by war." We cannot but remember that, as in the case of the French Revolution, so also in the case of the Reformation, those who rose up against tyranny were themselves deeply tainted with the vices which tyranny engenders. We cannot but remember that libels scarcely less scandalous than those of Hebert,[1] mummeries scarcely less absurd than those of Clootz,[2] and crimes scarcely less atrocious than those of Marat, disgrace the early history of Protestantism. The Reformation is an event long past. That volcano has spent its rage. The wide waste produced by its outbreak is forgotten. The landmarks which were swept away have been replaced. The ruined edifices have been repaired. The lava has covered with a rich incrustation the fields which it once devasted, and, after having turned a beautiful and fruitful garden into a desert, has again turned the desert into a still more beautiful and fruitful garden. The second great eruption is not yet over. The marks of its ravages are still all around us. The ashes are still hot beneath our feet. In some directions the deluge of fire still continues to spread. Yet experience surely entitles us to believe that this explosion, like that which preceded it, will fertilise the soil which it has devastated. Already, in those parts which have suffered most severely, rich cultivation and secure dwellings have begun to appear amidst the waste. The more we read of the history of past ages, the more we observe the signs of our own times, the more do we feel our hearts filled and swelled up by a good hope for the future destinies of the human race.

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[1] Jacques-René Hébert, 1755-1794, the most discreditable of Jacobins, editor of the obscene revolutionary paper, *Père Duchesne*, and member of the Commune established in the insurrection of the 10th of August. He was foremost in the profane ceremonies of the Goddess of Reason. He was brought to the guillotine by the joint enmity of Robespierre and Danton.

[2] See p. 326.

The history of the reformation in England is full of strange problems. The most prominent and extraordinary phænomenon which it presents to us is the gigantic strength of the government contrasted with the feebleness of the religious parties. During the twelve or thirteen years which followed the death of Henry the Eighth, the religion of the state was thrice changed. Protestantism was established by Edward; the Catholic Church was restored by Mary; Protestantism was again established by Elizabeth.[1] The faith of the nation seemed to depend on the personal inclinations of the sovereign. Nor was this all. An established church was then, as a matter of course, a persecuting church. Edward persecuted Catholics. Mary persecuted Protestants. Elizabeth persecuted Catholics again. The father of those three sovereigns had enjoyed the pleasure of persecuting both sects at once, and had sent to death, on the same hurdle, the heretic who denied the real presence, and the traitor who denied the royal supremacy. There was nothing in England like that fierce and bloody opposition which, in France, each of the religious factions in its turn offered to the government. We had neither a Coligny nor a Mayenne, neither a Moncontour nor an Ivry.[2] No English city braved sword and famine for the reformed doctrines with the spirit of Rochelle, or for the Catholic doctrines with the spirit of Paris.[3] Neither sect in England formed a League. Neither sect extorted a recantation from the sovereign. Neither sect could obtain from an adverse sovereign even a toleration. The English Protestants, after several years of domination, sank down with scarcely a struggle under the tyranny of Mary. The Catholics, after having regained and abused their old ascendency, submitted patiently to the severe rule of Elizabeth. Neither Protestants nor Catholics engaged in any great and well organized scheme of resistance. A few wild and tumultuous risings, suppressed as soon as they appeared, a few dark conspiracies in which only a small number of desperate men engaged, such were the utmost efforts made by these two parties to assert the most sacred of human rights, attacked by the most odious tyranny.

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[1] Compare the essay on Hallam's Constitutional History.

[2] The Duke of Mayenne became head of the Guise family by the assassination of his brother Henry, Duke of Guise, was appointed General of the Catholic League and was defeated by Henry of Navarre at the battle of Ivry in March, 1591. Mayenne was not remarkable either for talent or for devotion.

[3] Paris stood two sieges for the Catholic cause; the first in 1589, the second in 1591. In the second siege the Parisians endured the extremity of famine with unflinching courage. Rochelle stood a memorable siege in the reign of Louis XIII.

The explanation of these circumstances which has generally been given is very simple, but by no means satisfactory. The power of the crown, it is said, was then at its height, and was in fact despotic. This solution, we own, seems to us to be no solution at all. It has long been the fashion, a fashion introduced by Mr. Hume, to describe the English monarchy in the sixteenth century as an absolute monarchy. And such undoubtedly it appears to a superficial observer. Elizabeth, it is true, often spoke to her parliaments in language as haughty and imperious as that which the Great Turk would use to his divan. She punished with great severity members of the House of Commons who, in her opinion, carried the freedom of debate too far. She assumed the power of legislating by means of proclamations. She imprisoned her subjects without bringing them to a legal trial. Torture was often employed, in defiance of the laws of England, for the purpose of extorting confessions from those who were shut up in her dungeons. The authority of the Star-Chamber and of the Ecclesiastical Commission was at its highest point. Severe restraints were imposed on political and religious discussion. The number of presses was at one time limited. No man could print without a licence ; and every work had to undergo the scrutiny of the Primate, or the Bishop of London. Persons whose writings were displeasing to the court were cruelly mutilated, like Stubbs,[1] or put to death, like Penry.[2] Nonconformity was severely punished. The Queen prescribed the exact rule of religious faith and discipline ; and whoever departed from that rule, either to the right or to the left, was in danger of severe penalties.

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[1] John Stubbs, a Puritan, was sentenced in 1579 to lose his right hand for writing a pamphlet against the supposed design of marrying Elizabeth to the Duke of Anjou, brother of Henry III. of France.

[2] John Penry, a Puritan pamphleteer, was condemned and executed as a traitor in 1593.

Such was this government. Yet we know that it was loved by the great body of those who lived under it. We know that, during the fierce contests of the sixteenth century, both the hostile parties spoke of the time of Elizabeth as of a golden age. That great Queen has now been lying two hundred and thirty years in Henry the Seventh's chapel. Yet her memory is still dear to the hearts of a free people.

The truth seems to be that the government of the Tudors was, with a few occasional deviations, a popular government, under the forms of despotism. At first sight, it may seem that the prerogatives of Elizabeth were not less ample than those of Lewis the Fourteenth,[1] and her parliaments were as obsequious as his parliaments, that her warrant had as much authority as his *lettre-de-cachet.*[2] The extravagance with which her courtiers eulogized her personal and mental charms went beyond the adulation of Boileau and Molière. Lewis would have blushed to receive from those who composed the gorgeous circles of Marli and Versailles such outward marks of servitude as the haughty Britoness exacted of all who approached her. But the authority of Lewis rested on the support of his army.[3] The authority of Elizabeth rested solely on the support of her people. Those who say that her power was absolute do not sufficiently consider in what her power consisted. Her power consisted in the willing obedience of her subjects, in their attachment to her person and to her office, in their respect for the old line from which she sprang, in their sense of the general security which they enjoyed under her government. These were the means, and the only means, which she had at her command for carrying her decrees into execution, for resisting foreign enemies, and for crushing domestic treason. There was not a ward in the city, there was not a hundred in any shire in England, which could not have overpowered the handful of armed men who composed her household. If a hostile sovereign threatened invasion, if an ambitious noble raised the standard of revolt, she could have recourse only to the trainbands of her capital and the array of her counties, to the citizens and yeomen of England, commanded by the merchants and esquires of England.

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[1] The French Parliaments were only high courts of justice which claimed the right of registering the royal decrees, and therefore totally different from the English Parliament.

[2] The *lettre-de-cachet* was the order under the royal seal by which any Frenchman previous to the Revolution might be arrested and imprisoned for an indefinite time without being brought to trial.

[3] This is somewhat misleading. Louis no doubt possessed an irresistible standing army, but his power had deeper roots. The clergy, nobility and middle classes were enthusiastic in their loyalty, and the lower classes were either actively loyal or at least acquiescent save when oppressive taxation or religious persecution drove them to revolt.

Thus, when intelligence arrived of the vast preparations which Philip was making for the subjugation of the realm, the first person to whom the government thought of applying for assistance was the Lord Mayor of London. They sent to ask him what force the city would engage to furnish for the defence of the kingdom against the Spaniards. The Mayor and Common Council, in return, desired to know what force the Queen's Highness wished them to furnish. The answer was, fifteen ships and five thousand men. The Londoners deliberated on the matter, and, two days after, "humbly intreated the council, in sign of their perfect love and loyalty to prince and country, to accept ten thousand men, and thirty ships amply furnished."

People who could give such signs as these of their loyalty were by no means to be misgoverned with impunity. The English in the sixteenth century were, beyond all doubt, a free people. They had not, indeed, the outward show of freedom; but they had the reality. They had not as good a constitution as we have; but they had that without which the best constitution is as useless as the king's proclamation against vice and immorality, that which, without any constitution, keeps rulers in awe, force, and the spirit to use it. Parliaments, it is true, were rarely held, and were not very respectfully treated. The great charter was often violated. But the people had a security against gross and systematic misgovernment, far stronger than all the parchment that was ever marked with the sign manual, and than all the wax that was ever pressed by the great seal.

It is a common error in politics to confound means with ends. Constitutions, charters, petitions of right, declarations of right, representative assemblies, electoral colleges, are not good government; nor do they, even when most elaborately constructed, necessarily produce good government. Laws exist in vain for those who have not the courage and the means to defend them. Electors meet in vain where want makes them the slaves of the landlord, or where superstition makes them the slaves of the priest. Representative assemblies sit in vain unless they have at their command, in the last resort, the physical power which is necessary to make their deliberations free, and their votes effectual.

The Irish are better represented in parliament than the Scotch, who indeed are not represented at all.[1] But are the Irish better governed than the Scotch?[2] Surely not. This circumstance has of late been used as an argument against reform. It proves nothing against reform. It proves only this, that laws have no magical, no supernatural, virtue; that laws do not act like Aladdin's lamp or Prince Ahmed's apple; that priestcraft, that ignorance, that the rage of contending factions, may make good institutions useless; that intelligence, sobriety, industry, moral freedom, firm union, may supply in a great measure the defects of the worst representative system. A people whose education and habits are such, that, in every quarter of the world, they rise above the mass of those with whom they mix, as surely as oil rises to the top of water, a people of such temper and self-government that the wildest popular excesses recorded in their history partake of the gravity of judicial proceedings,[3] and of the solemnity of religious rites, a people whose national pride and mutual attachment have passed into a proverb, a people whose high and fierce spirit, so forcibly described in the haughty motto which encircles their thistle,[4] preserved their independence, during a struggle of centuries, from the encroachments of wealthier and more powerful neighbours, such a people cannot be long oppressed. Any government, however constituted, must respect their wishes and tremble at their discontents. It is indeed most desirable that such a people should exercise a direct influence on the conduct of affairs, and should make their wishes known through constitutional organs. But some influence, direct or indirect, they will assuredly possess. Some organ, constitutional or unconstitutional, they will assuredly find. They will be better governed under a good constitution than under a bad constitution. But they will be better governed under the worst constitution than some other nations under the best. In any general classification of constitutions, the constitution of Scotland must be reckoned as one of the worst, perhaps as the worst, in Christian Europe. Yet the Scotch are not ill governed. And the reason is simply that they will not bear to be ill governed.

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[1] AUTHOR'S FOOTNOTE.—It must be remembered that this was written before the passing of the Reform Act.

[2] Before 1832 the franchise in Scotland was so narrowly restricted that the Scotch could hardly be said to be represented in Parliament. In a population of perhaps 2,000,000 there were only 4,000 electors; in the capital only thirty-three and in Glasgow the same number.

[3] Macaulay was thinking, perhaps, of the methodic procedure of the mob in the Porteous Riot, described by Scott in the *Heart of Midlothian.*

[4] "Nemo me impune lacessit."

In some of the Oriental monarchies, in Afghanistan for example, though there exists nothing which an European publicist would call a Constitution, the sovereign generally governs in conformity with certain rules established for the public benefit; and the sanction of those rules is, that every Afghan approves them, and that every Afghan is a soldier.

The monarchy of England in the sixteenth century was a monarchy of this kind. It is called an absolute monarchy, because little respect was paid by the Tudors to those institutions which we have been accustomed to consider as the sole checks on the power of the sovereign. A modern Englishman can hardly understand how the people can have had any real security for good government under kings who levied benevolences, and chid the House of Commons as they would have chid a pack of dogs. People do not sufficiently consider that, though the legal checks were feeble, the natural checks were strong. There was one great and effectual limitation on the royal authority, the knowledge that, if the patience of the nation were severely tried, the nation would put forth its strength, and that its strength would be found irresistible. If a large body of Englishmen became thoroughly discontented, instead of presenting requisitions, holding large meetings, passing resolutions, signing petitions, forming associations and unions, they rose up; they took their halberds and their bows; and, if the sovereign was not sufficiently popular to find among his subjects other halberds and other bows to oppose to the rebels, nothing remained for him but a repetition of the horrible scenes of Berkeley and Pomfret. He had no regular army which could, by its superior arms and its superior skill, overawe or vanquish the sturdy Commons of his realm, abounding in the native hardihood of Englishmen, and trained in the simple discipline of the militia.

It has been said that the Tudors were as absolute as the Cæsars. Never was parallel so unfortunate. The government of the Tudors was the direct opposite to the government of Augustus and his successors. The Cæsars ruled despotically, by means of a great standing army, under the decent forms of a republican constitution. They called themselves citizens. They mixed unceremoniously with other citizens. In theory they were only the elective magistrates of a free commonwealth. Instead of arrogating to themselves despotic power, they acknowledged allegiance to the senate. They were merely the lieutenants of that venerable body. They mixed in debate. They even appeared as advocates before the courts of law. Yet they could safely indulge in the wildest freaks of cruelty and rapacity, while their legions remained faithful. Our Tudors, on the other hand, under the titles and forms of monarchical supremacy, were essentially popular magistrates. They had no means of protecting themselves against the public hatred; and they were therefore compelled to court the public favour. To enjoy all the state and all the personal indulgences of absolute power, to be adored with Oriental prostrations, to dispose at will of the liberty and even of the life of ministers and courtiers, this the nation granted to the Tudors. But the condition on which they were suffered to be the tyrants of Whitehall was that they should be the mild and paternal sovereigns of England.[1] They were under the same restraints with regard to their people under which a military despot is placed with regard to his army. They would have found it as dangerous to grind their subjects with cruel taxation as Nero would have found it to leave his prætorians unpaid. Those who immediately surrounded the royal person, and engaged in the hazardous game of ambition, were exposed to the most fearful dangers. Buckingham, Cromwell, Surrey, Seymour of Sudeley, Somerset, Northumberland, Suffolk, Norfolk, Essex, perished on the scaffold. But in general the country gentleman hunted and the merchant traded in peace. Even Henry, as cruel as Domitian, but far more politic, contrived, while reeking with the blood of the Lamiæ, to be a favourite with the cobblers.[2]

The Tudors committed very tyrannical acts. But in their ordinary dealings with the people they were not, and could not safely be, tyrants. Some excesses were easily pardoned. For the nation was proud of the high and fiery blood of its magnificent princes, and saw in many proceedings which a lawyer would even then have condemned, the outbreak of the same noble spirit which so manfully hurled foul scorn at Parma and at Spain. But to this endurance there was a limit. If the government ventured to adopt measures which the people really felt to be oppressive, it was soon compelled to change its course. When Henry the

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[1] Allowance being made for the change in manners, we might, perhaps, term the administration of Elizabeth mild and paternal; but we could hardly so describe the administration of any other Tudor.

[2] "Sed periit postquam cerdonibus esse timendus
Cœperat. Hoc nocuit Lamiarum cæde madenti."
—Juvenal, satire iv., lines 153, 154.

Eighth attempted to raise a forced loan of unusual amount by proceedings of unusual rigour, the opposition which he encountered was such as appalled even his stubborn and imperious spirit. The people, we are told, said that, if they were treated thus, "then were it worse than the taxes of France; and England should be bond, and not free." The county of Suffolk rose in arms. The king prudently yielded to an opposition which, if he had persisted, would, in all probability, have taken the form of a general rebellion.[1] Towards the close of the reign of Elizabeth, the people felt themselves aggrieved by the monopolies. The Queen, proud and courageous as she was, shrank from a contest with the nation, and, with admirable sagacity, conceded all that her subjects had demanded, while it was yet in her power to concede with dignity and grace.

It cannot be imagined that a people who had in their own hands the means of checking their princes would suffer any prince to impose upon them a religion generally detested. It is absurd to suppose that, if the nation had been decidedly attached to the Protestant faith, Mary could have re-established the Papal supremacy. It is equally absurd to suppose that, if the nation had been zealous for the ancient religion, Elizabeth could have restored the Protestant Church. The truth is, that the people were not disposed to engage in a struggle either for the new or for the old doctrines. Abundance of spirit was shown when it seemed likely that Mary would resume her father's grants of church property, or that she would sacrifice the interests of England to the husband whom she regarded with unmerited tenderness. That queen found that it would be madness to attempt the restoration of the abbey lands. She found that her subjects would never suffer her to make her hereditary kingdom a fief of Castile. On these points she encountered a steady resistance, and was compelled to give way. If she was able to establish the Catholic worship and to persecute those who would not conform to it, it was evidently because the people cared far less for the Protestant religion than for the rights of property and for the independence of the English crown. In plain words, they did not think the difference between the hostile sects worth a struggle. There was undoubtedly a zealous Protestant party and a zealous Catholic party. But both these parties were, we believe, very small. We doubt, whether both together made up, at the time of Mary's death, the twentieth part of the nation. The remaining nineteen twentieths halted between the two opinions, and were not disposed to risk a revolution in the government, for the purpose of giving to either of the extreme factions an advantage over the other.

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[1] In 1525 commissioners were appointed to demand the sixth part of every man's substance payable in money, plate or jewels, according to the last valuation. This was rather a tax than a loan. See Hall's *Chronicle*, pp. 645, 696.

We possess no data which will enable us to compare with exactness the force of the two sects. Mr. Butler asserts that, even at the accession of James the First, a majority of the population of England were Catholics.[1] This is pure assertion ; and is not only unsupported by evidence, but, we think, completely disproved by the strongest evidence. Dr. Lingard is of opinion that the Catholics were one half of the nation in the middle of the reign of Elizabeth.[2] Rushton says that, when Elizabeth came to the throne, the Catholics were two thirds of the nation, and the Protestants only one third.[3] The most judicious and impartial of English historians, Mr. Hallam, is, on the contrary, of opinion, that two thirds were Protestants, and only one third Catholics.[4] To us, we must confess, it seems incredible that, if the Protestants were really two to one, they should have borne the government of Mary, or that, if the Catholics were really two to one, they should have borne the government of Elizabeth. We are at a loss to conceive how a sovereign who has no standing army, and whose power rests solely on the loyalty of his subjects, can continue for years to persecute a religion to which the majority of his subjects are sincerely attached. In fact, the Protestants did rise up against one sister, and the Catholics against the other. Those risings clearly showed how small and feeble both the parties were. Both in the one case and in the other the nation ranged itself on the side of the government, and the insurgents were speedily put down and punished. The Kentish gentleman[5] who took up arms for the reformed doctrines against Mary, and the great Northern Earls[1] who displayed the banner of the Five Wounds against Elizabeth, were alike considered by the great body of their countrymen as wicked disturbers of the public peace.

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[1] *Historical Memoirs respecting the English, Irish and Scotch Catholics from the Reformation*, vol. i., p. 261.

[2] Lingard does not commit himself to a definite opinion. He says: "The real number of the English Catholics was unknown ; but it was loosely conjectured that they amounted to at least one half of the population of the kingdom." He is speaking of the year 1587 (*History of England*, vol. vi., ch. vii.).

[3] Rushton, *De Schismate Angliæ*, p. 272.

[4] I cannot discover this statement in Hallam. On the contrary he speaks of the restoration of Catholicism by Mary as acceptable, perhaps, to the majority of the nation, although he thinks that her intolerance provoked a reaction (*Constitutional History*, ch. ii.).

[5] The Kentish insurrection was raised by Sir Thomas Wyatt in 1554. See p. 122.

The account which Cardinal Bentivoglio[2] gave of the state of religion in England well deserves consideration. The zealous Catholics he reckoned at one thirtieth part of the nation. The people who would without the least scruple become Catholics, if the Catholic religion were established, he estimated at four fifths of the nation. We believe this account to have been very near the truth. We believe that the people, whose minds were made up on either side, who were inclined to make any sacrifice or run any risk for either religion, were very few. Each side had a few enterprising champions, and a few stout-hearted martyrs; but the nation, undetermined in its opinions and feelings, resigned itself implicitly to the guidance of the government, and lent to the sovereign for the time being an equally ready aid against either of the extreme parties.

We are very far from saying that the English of that generation were irreligious. They held firmly those doctrines which are common to the Catholic and to the Protestant theology. But they had no fixed opinion as to the matters in dispute between the churches. They were in a situation resembling that of those Borderers whom Sir Walter Scott has described with so much spirit,

> "Who sought the beeves that made their broth
> In England and in Scotland both."[3]

And who

> "Nine times outlawed had been
> By England's king and Scotland's queen."

They were sometimes Protestants, sometimes Catholics; sometimes half Protestants half Catholics.

The English had not, for ages, been bigoted Papists. In the fourteenth century, the first and perhaps the greatest of the reformers, John Wickliffe, had stirred the public mind to its inmost depths. During the same century, a scandalous schism in the Catholic Church had diminished, in many parts of Europe, the reverence in which the Roman Pontiffs were held.[1] It is clear that, a hundred years before the time of Luther, a great party in this kingdom was eager for a change at least as extensive as that which was subsequently effected by Henry the Eighth. The House of Commons, in the reign of Henry the Fourth, proposed a confiscation of ecclesiastical property,[2] more sweeping and violent even than that which took place under the administration of Thomas Cromwell; and, though defeated in this attempt, they succeeded in depriving the clerical order of some of its most oppressive privileges. The splendid conquests of Henry the Fifth turned the attention of the nation from domestic reform. The Council of Constance removed some of the grossest of those scandals which had deprived the Church of the public respect. The authority of that venerable synod propped up the sinking authority of the Popedom. A considerable reaction took place. It cannot, however, be doubted, that there was still some concealed Lollardism in England; or that many who did not absolutely dissent from any doctrine held by the Church of Rome were jealous of the wealth and power enjoyed by her ministers. At the very beginning of the reign of Henry the Eighth, a struggle took place between the clergy and the courts of law, in which the courts of law remained victorious. One of the bishops, on that occasion, declared that the common people entertained the strongest prejudices against his order, and that a clergyman had no chance of fair play before a lay tribunal. The London juries, he said, entertained such a spite to the Church that, if Abel were a priest, they would find him guilty of the murder of Cain.[3] This was said a few months before the time when Martin Luther began to preach at Wittenburg against indulgences.

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[1] The Earls of Northumberland and Westmorland who raised a rebellion in 1569 to release Mary Queen of Scots and restore the Catholic religion.

[2] Guido Bentivoglio, 1579-1644, sprung from a noble Bolognese house, having taken holy orders, rose rapidly by the help at once of his birth and of his ability, and in 1607 was sent to Flanders as Papal Nuncio. In 1617 he went to France in the same character and in 1621 he was made a cardinal. The account of the state of religion in England to which Macaulay refers will be found in part ii. of his *Relazioni.*

[3] *Lay of the Last Minstrel,* canto vi.

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[1] The so-called Great Schism which had its origin in the return of the Popes from Avignon to Rome. In 1378 the French cardinals repudiated Urban VI. and elected an anti-pope who took the style of Clement VI. The Papacy was thenceforwards contested by two or even by three claimants until the Council of Constance ended the scandal in 1417 by deposing the rivals and electing a new Pope, Martin V.

[2] According to Walsingham the knights of the shires proposed in the Parliament of 1410 that the lands of the bishops and of the religious houses should be confiscated and made a provision for fifteen earls, 1,500 knights, 6,000 esquires and 100 hospitals, alleging that even thus there would remain a large balance for the King.

[3] Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*, iv., p. 196: "Assured I am that if my chancellor be tried by any twelve men in London, they be so maliciously set *in favorem hæreticæ pravitatis* that they will cast and condemn any clerk, though he were as innocent as Abel" (Fitz-James, Bishop of London, to Cardinal Wolsey).

As the Reformation did not find the English bigoted Papists, so neither was it conducted in such a manner as to make them zealous Protestants. It was not under the direction of men like that fiery Saxon who swore that he would go to Worms,[1] though he had to face as many devils as there were tiles on the houses, or like that brave Switzer who was struck down while praying in front of the ranks of Zurich.[2] No preacher of religion had the same power here which Calvin had at Geneva and Knox in Scotland. The government put itself early at the head of the movement, and thus acquired power to regulate, and occasionally to arrest, the movement.

To many persons it appears extraordinary that Henry the Eighth should have been able to maintain himself so long in an intermediate position between the Catholic and Protestant parties. Most extraordinary it would indeed be, if we were to suppose that the nation consisted of none but decided Catholics and decided Protestants. The fact is that the great mass of the people was neither Catholic nor Protestant, but was, like its sovereign, midway between the two sects. Henry, in that very part of his conduct which has been represented as most capricious and inconsistent, was probably following a policy far more pleasing to the majority of his subjects than a policy like that of Edward, or a policy like that of Mary, would have been. Down even to the very close of the reign of Elizabeth, the people were in a state somewhat resembling that in which, as Machiavelli says, the inhabitants of the Roman empire were, during the transition from heathenism to Christianity; "sendo la maggior parte di loro incerti a quale Dio dovessero ricorrere."[3] They were generally, we think, favourable to the royal supremacy. They disliked the policy of the Court of Rome. Their spirit rose against the interference of a foreign priest with their national concerns. The bull which pronounced sentence of deposition against Elizabeth, the plots which were formed against her life, the usurpation of her titles by the Queen of Scotland, the hostility of Philip, excited their strongest indignation. The cruelties of Bonner were remembered with disgust. Some parts of the new system, the use of the English language, for example, in public worship, and the communion in both kinds,

[1] Luther who insisted upon appearing before the Diet of Worms, though friends suggested that the emperor's safe-conduct would not be respected.

[2] Huldreich Zwingli, better known as Zuinglius, was slain at the battle of Cappell fought in 1531 between the Protestant and the Catholic cantons of Switzerland.

[3] "The greater part of them not feeling sure to what God they should betake themselves" (*History of Florence*, bk. i.).

were undoubtedly popular. On the other hand, the early lessons of the nurse and the priest were not forgotten. The ancient ceremonies were long remembered with affectionate reverence. A large portion of the ancient theology lingered to the last in the minds which had been imbued with it in childhood.

The best proof that the religion of the people was of this mixed kind is furnished by the Drama of that age. No man would bring unpopular opinions prominently forward in a play intended for representation. And we may safely conclude, that feelings and opinions which pervade the whole Dramatic Literature of a generation, are feelings and opinions of which the men of that generation generally partook.

The greatest and most popular dramatists of the Elizabethan age treat religious subjects in a very remarkable manner. They speak respectfully of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity. But they speak neither like Catholics nor like Protestants, but like persons who are wavering between the two systems, or who have made a system for themselves out of parts selected from both. They seem to hold some of the Romish rites and doctrines in high respect. They treat the vow of celibacy, for example, so tempting, and, in later times, so common a subject for ribaldry, with mysterious reverence. Almost every member of a religious order whom they introduce is a holy and venerable man. We remember in their plays nothing resembling the coarse ridicule with which the Catholic religion and its ministers were assailed, two generations later, by dramatists who wished to please the multitude. We remember no Friar Dominic, no Father Foigard,[1] among the characters drawn by those great poets. The scene at the close of the Knight of Malta[2] might have been written by a fervent Catholic. Massinger shows a great fondness for ecclesiastics of the Romish Church, and has even gone so far as to bring a virtuous and interesting Jesuit on the stage.[3] Ford, in that fine play which it is painful to read and scarcely decent to name, assigns a highly creditable part to the Friar. The partiality of Shakspeare for Friars is well known. In Hamlet, the Ghost complains that he died without extreme unction, and, in defiance of the article which condemns the doctrine of purgatory, declares that he is

[1] Friar Dominic is the hero of Dryden's comedy, "The Spanish Friar." Father Foigard is an Irish priest in Farquhar's comedy, "The Beaux' Stratagem."

[2] By Fletcher.

[3] Francisco in "The Renegado," acted in 1624 and published in 1630.

> "Confined to fast in fires,
> Till the foul crimes, done in his days of nature,
> Are burnt and purged away."[1]

These lines, we suspect, would have raised a tremendous storm in the theatre at any time during the reign of Charles the Second. They were clearly not written by a zealous Protestant, or for zealous Protestants. Yet the author of King John and Henry the Eighth was surely no friend to papal supremacy.

There is, we think, only one solution of the phænomena which we find in the history and in the drama of that age. The religion of the English was a mixed religion, like that of the Samaritan settlers, described in the second book of Kings, who "feared the Lord, and served their graven images;" like that of the Judaizing Christians who blended the ceremonies and doctrines of the synagogue with those of the church; like that of the Mexican Indians, who, during many generations after the subjugation of their race, continued to unite with the rites learned from their conquerors the worship of the grotesque idols which had been adored by Montezuma and Guatemozin.[2]

These feelings were not confined to the populace. Elizabeth herself was by no means exempt from them. A crucifix, with wax-lights burning round it, stood in her private chapel. She always spoke with disgust and anger of the marriage of priests. "I was in horror," says Archbishop Parker, "to hear such words to come from her mild nature and Christian learned conscience, as she spake concerning God's holy ordinance and institution of matrimony."[3] Burleigh prevailed on her to connive at the marriages of churchmen. But she would only connive; and the children sprung from such marriages were illegitimate till the accession of James the First.

That which is, as we have said, the great stain on the character of Burleigh is also the great stain on the character of Elizabeth. Being herself an Adiaphorist, having no scruple about conforming to the Romish Church when conformity was necessary to her own safety, retaining to the last moment of her life a fondness for much of the doctrine and much of the ceremonial of that church, she yet subjected that church to a persecution even more odious than the persecution with which her sister had harassed the Protestants. We say more odious. For Mary had at least the plea of fanaticism. She did nothing for her religion which she was not prepared to suffer for it. She had held it firmly under persecution. She fully believed it to be essential to salvation. If she burned the bodies of her subjects, it was in order to rescue their souls. Elizabeth had no such pretext. In opinion, she was little more than half a Protestant. She had professed, when it suited her, to be wholly a Catholic. There is an excuse, a wretched excuse, for the massacres of Piedmont[1] and the *Autos da fe* of Spain. But what can be said in defence of a ruler who is at once indifferent and intolerant?

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[1] "Hamlet," act i., scene 5.

[2] The last native sovereigns of Mexico.

[3] Archbishop Parker to Cecil, printed in Strype's *Life of Parker*, Appendix, No. 17.

If the great Queen, whose memory is still held in just veneration by Englishmen, had possessed sufficient virtue and sufficient enlargement of mind to adopt those principles which More,[2] wiser in speculation than in action, had avowed in the preceding generation, and by which the excellent L'Hospital[3] regulated his conduct in her own time, how different would be the colour of the whole history of the last two hundred and fifty years! She had the happiest opportunity ever vouchsafed to any sovereign of establishing perfect freedom of conscience throughout her dominions, without danger to her government, without scandal to any large party among her subjects. The nation, as it was clearly ready to profess either religion, would, beyond all doubt, have been ready to tolerate both. Unhappily for her own glory and for the public peace, she adopted a policy from the effects of which the empire is still suffering. The yoke of the Established Church was pressed down on the people till they would bear it no longer. Then a reaction came. Another reaction followed. To the tyranny of the establishment succeeded the tumultuous conflict of sects, infuriated by manifold wrongs, and drunk with unwonted freedom. To the conflict of sects succeeded again the cruel domination of one persecuting church. At length oppression put off its most horrible form, and took a milder aspect. The penal laws which had been framed for the protection of the established church were abolished. But exclusions and disabilities still remained. These exclusions and disabilities, after having generated the most fearful discontents, after having rendered all government in one part of the kingdom impossible, after having brought the

[1] The savage persecution of the Waldenses by Charles Emanuel II., Duke of Savoy, in 1655, which provoked the intervention of Cromwell and is commemorated by a sonnet of Milton.

[2] In his *Utopia*.

[3] Michel L'Hôpital, 1505-1573, Chancellor of France under Francis II. and Charles IX., who laboured strenuously although vainly in the cause of good government and religious toleration.

state to the very brink of ruin, have, in our times, been removed, but, though removed, have left behind them a rankling which may last for many years. It is melancholy to think with what ease Elizabeth might have united all conflicting sects under the shelter of the same impartial laws and the same paternal throne, and thus have placed the nation in the same situation, as far as the rights of conscience are concerned, in which we at last stand, after all the heart-burnings, the persecutions, the conspiracies, the seditions, the revolutions, the judicial murders, the civil wars, of ten generations.[1]

This is the dark side of her character. Yet she surely was a great woman. Of all the sovereigns who exercised a power which was seemingly absolute, but which in fact depended for support on the love and confidence of their subjects, she was by far the most illustrious. It has often been alleged as an excuse for the misgovernment of her successors that they only followed her example, that precedents might be found in the transactions of her reign for persecuting the Puritans, for levying money without the sanction of the House of Commons, for confining men without bringing them to trial, for interfering with the liberty of parliamentary debate. All this may be true. But it is no good plea for her successors; and for this plain reason, that they were her successors. She governed one generation, they governed another; and between the two generations there was almost as little in common as between the people of two different countries. It was not by looking at the particular measures which Elizabeth had adopted, but by looking at the great general principles of her government, that those who followed her were likely to learn the art of managing untractable subjects. If, instead of searching the records of her reign for precedents which might seem to vindicate the mutilation of Prynne and the imprisonment of Eliot,[2] the Stuarts had attempted to discover the fundamental rules which guided her conduct in all her dealings with her people, they would have perceived that their policy was then most unlike to hers, when to a superficial observer it would have seemed most to resemble hers. Firm, haughty, sometimes unjust and cruel, in her proceedings towards individuals or towards small parties, she avoided with care, or retracted with speed, every measure which seemed likely to alienate the great mass of the people. She gained more honour and more love by the manner in which she repaired her errors than she would have gained by never committing errors. If such a man as Charles the First had been in her place when the whole nation was crying out against the monopolies, he would have refused all redress. He would have dissolved the Parliament, and imprisoned the most popular members. He would have called another Parliament. He would have given some vague and delusive promises of relief in return for subsidies. When entreated to fulfil his promises, he would have again dissolved the Parliament, and again imprisoned his leading opponents. The country would have become more agitated than before. The next House of Commons would have been more unmanageable than that which preceded it. The tyrant would have agreed to all that the nation demanded. He would have solemnly ratified an act abolishing monopolies for ever. He would have received a large supply in return for this concession; and within half a year new patents, more oppressive than those which had been cancelled, would have been issued by scores. Such was the policy which brought the heir of a long line of kings, in early youth the darling of his countrymen, to a prison and a scaffold.

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[1] The whole of this passage is open to dispute. It is true that Elizabeth held views intermediate between Protestant and Catholic and was not an enthusiast for any creed. It is also true that the mass of the English people were neither definite nor extreme in their religious beliefs. But in the sixteenth century sovereigns and nations alike still clung to the mediæval doctrine that the State must enforce religious uniformity. It is doubtful whether if Elizabeth had been frankly tolerant she could have kept her throne. Even the Puritans who, as the greatest innovators, had the strongest reason for advocating freedom, did not then wish to form separate communions. They wished to reform the national church, so as to impose their own doctrine and ritual upon dissentients. The conflict under Elizabeth, James I. and Charles I. was not a conflict between an Established Church and Nonconformist sects, but between two parties in the Established Church both seeking to fashion it on their own model.

[2] See pp. 418, 419.

Elizabeth, before the House of Commons could address her, took out of their mouths the words which they were about to utter in the name of the nation. Her promises went beyond their desires. Her performance followed close upon her promise. She did not treat the nation as an adverse party, as a party which had an interest opposed to hers, as a party to which she was to grant as few advantages as possible, and from which she was to extort as much money as possible. Her benefits were given, not sold; and, when once given, they were never withdrawn. She gave them too with a frankness, an effusion of heart, a princely dignity, a motherly tenderness, which enhanced their value. They were received by the sturdy country gentlemen who had come up to Westminster full of resentment, with tears of joy, and shouts of "God save the Queen." Charles the First gave up half the prerogatives of his crown to the Commons; and the Commons sent him in return the Grand Remonstrance.

We had intended to say something concerning that illustrious group of which Elizabeth is the central figure, that group which the last of the bards saw in vision from the top of Snowdon, encircling the Virgin Queen,

> "Many a baron bold,
> And gorgeous dames, and statesmen old
> In bearded majesty."

We had intended to say something concerning the dexterous Walsingham, the impetuous Oxford, the graceful Sackville, the all-accomplished Sydney; concerning Essex, the ornament of the court and of the camp, the model of chivalry, the munificent patron of genius, whom great virtues, great courage, great talents, the favour of his sovereign, the love of his countrymen, all that seemed to ensure a happy and glorious life, led to an early and an ignominious death; concerning Raleigh, the soldier, the sailor, the scholar, the courtier, the orator, the poet, the historian, the philosopher, whom we picture to ourselves, sometimes reviewing the Queen's guard, sometimes giving chase to a Spanish galleon, then answering the chiefs of the country party in the House of Commons, then again murmuring one of his sweet love-songs too near the ears of her Highness's maids of honour, and soon after poring over the Talmud, or collating Polybius with Livy. We had intended also to say something concerning the literature of that splendid period, and especially concerning those two incomparable men, the Prince of Poets, and the Prince of Philosophers, who have made the Elizabethan age a more glorious and important era in the history of the human mind than the age of Pericles, of Augustus, or of Leo. But subjects so vast require a space far larger than we can at present afford. We therefore stop here, fearing that, if we proceed, our article may swell to a bulk exceeding that of all other reviews, as much as Dr. Nares's book exceeds the bulk of all other histories.

WAR OF THE SUCCESSION IN SPAIN

JANUARY, 1833

NOTE ON THE ESSAY

THE essay on the War of the Succession in Spain is full of brilliant and powerful passages in Macaulay's most characteristic style. The vivid picture of the decline of the Spanish monarchy and the rapid narrative of Peterborough's campaigns have been the delight of many readers of all ages. Unfortunately none of the other essays has suffered so much by the progress of historical criticism. It now appears that Macaulay's description of the War of the Succession is incorrect in outline as well as in detail and that the hero of his story was little better than an impostor.

Macaulay, who had made no deep study of Spanish history, took for granted the account of the war which passed current with English historians in the nineteenth century and which was derived largely from the so-called *Memoirs of Captain Carleton.* Colonel Parnell, who has rewritten the history of the war from original documents and in the light of professional knowledge, claims to have disproved the traditional story in almost every particular. In his pages Lord Galway appears as an illustrious commander, equally firm and skilful; Prince George of Hesse-Darmstadt as a hero whom only a premature death debarred from winning the highest honours; and Peterborough as the most unsoldierly of generals, destitute of science, of resolution and even of common honesty, throwing away all the favours of fortune and filching from better men the glory of those successes which he had only not prevented.

If Colonel Parnell is correct the *Memoirs of Captain Carleton* must be a cheat. Colonel Parnell has therefore had to explain by whom and for what object they were written. In the eighteenth century the *Memoirs* were little known and were not followed by any historian. After they had been edited by Scott in the year 1809 they became famous, and were taken as authentic by historians. But Scott apparently knew nothing of Captain Carleton, and misdated the first publication of the *Memoirs*. On the other hand Mr. Wilson came to the conclusion that the *Memoirs* were really written by Defoe, whose genius for rendering romance indistinguishable from fact has seldom been paralleled. Every editor of Defoe, since Wilson wrote, has included the *Memoirs* among Defoe's works. Colonel Parnell, however, believes them to have been written by Swift. Whether the author of *Robinson Crusoe* or the author of *Gulliver's Travels* was better qualified to delight and to deceive the public with such a feat of ingenuity might well be doubted. Colonel Parnell rests his opinion partly upon internal evidence too intricate to be summed up here, partly on the circumstance that Swift, as a friend and admirer of Peterborough, had a motive for palming off on the public a flattering tale of his achievements by a professed eye-witness. Colonel Parnell has stated the facts, on which he relies, briefly in an appendix to his *History*, and more fully in an article in the *English Historical Review* for January, 1891. Whatever we may think respecting the probable author of the *Memoirs* we must admit that Colonel Parnell has destroyed their historical credit.

WAR OF THE SUCCESSION IN SPAIN

History of the War of the Succession in Spain. By Lord Mahon. 8vo. London: 1832.

THE days when Miscellanies in Prose and Verse by a Person of Honour, and Romances of M. Scuderi,[1] done into English by a Person of Quality, were attractive to readers and profitable to booksellers, have long gone by. The literary privileges once enjoyed by Lords are as obsolete as their right to kill the king's deer on their way to Parliament, or as their old remedy of *scandalum magnatum.*[2] Yet we must acknowledge that, though our political opinions are by no means aristocratical, we always feel kindly disposed towards noble authors. Industry, and a taste for intellectual pleasures, are peculiarly respectable in those who can afford to be idle and who have every temptation to be dissipated. It is impossible not to wish success to a man who, finding himself placed, without any exertion or any merit on his part, above the mass of society, voluntarily descends from his eminence in search of distinctions which he may justly call his own.

This is, we think, the second appearance of Lord Mahon in the character of an author. His first book[3] was creditable to him, but was in every respect inferior to the work which now lies before us. He has undoubtedly some of the most valuable qualities of a historian, great diligence in examining authorities, great judgment in weighing testimony, and great impartiality in estimating characters. We are not aware that he has in any instance forgotten the duties belonging to his literary functions in the feelings of a kinsman. He does no more than justice to his ancestor Stanhope;[1] he does full justice to Stanhope's enemies and rivals. His narrative is very perspicuous, and is also entitled to the praise, seldom, we grieve to say, deserved by modern writers, of being very concise. It must be admitted, however, that, with many of the best qualities of a literary veteran, he has some of the faults of a literary novice. He has not yet acquired a great command of words. His style is seldom easy, and is now and then unpleasantly stiff. He is so bigoted a purist that he transforms the Abbé d'Estrées into an Abbot. We do not like to see French words introduced into English composition; but, after all, the first law of writing, that law to which all other laws are subordinate, is this, that the words employed shall be such as convey to the reader the meaning of the writer. Now an Abbot is the head of a religious house; an Abbé is quite a different sort of person.[2] It is better undoubtedly to use an English word than a French word; but it is better to use a French word than to misuse an English word.

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[1] Georges de Scudéri, 1601-1667, a playwright and poet, once famous. In his name his sister, Madeleine de Scudéri, the real author, published her first romances, *Ibrahim, or the Illustrious Bassa; Artamene, or the Great Cyrus* and the first volumes of *Clelia.* These romances, extending to a length of many volumes, full of elaborate and euphuistic conversations and pervaded by high-flown sentiment, were for many years the delight of the fashionable world and more especially of the fair sex.

[2] In ancient times words spoken in derogation of a peer, a judge or any other great officer of the realm rendered the speaker liable to imprisonment and damages even when they would not have been enough to give an ordinary person an action for defamation. This special remedy was known as *scandalum magnatum.*

[3] *The Life of Belisarius*, published in 1829.

Lord Mahon is also a little too fond of uttering moral reflections in a style too sententious and oracular. We will give one instance: "Strange as it seems, experience shows that we usually feel far more animosity against those whom we have injured than against those who injure us: and this remark holds good with every degree of intellect, with every class of fortune, with a prince or a peasant, a stripling or an elder, a hero or a prince." This remark might have seemed strange at the court of Nimrod or Chedorlaomer; but it has now been for many generations considered as a truism rather than a paradox. Every boy has written on the thesis "*Odisse quem læseris.*"[3] Scarcely any lines in English poetry are better known than that vigorous couplet,

> "Forgiveness to the injured does belong;
> But they ne'er pardon who have done the wrong."[4]

The historians and philosophers have quite done with this maxim, and have abandoned it, like other maxims which have lost their gloss, to bad novelists, by whom it will very soon be worn to rags.

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[1] See p. 525.

[2] An abbé was originally the same as an abbot. But by the concordat of 1516 between Leo X. and Francis I. the Crown of France obtained the right of naming commendatary abbés who drew a large part of the revenue, but left the government of the house to a prior, had no intention of doing clerical duty and were not always in holy orders.

[3] "Proprium humani ingenï est odisse quem læseris."
—TACITUS, *Life of Agricola*, ch. xlii.

[4] Dryden, "Conquest of Grenada," pt. ii., act i., scene 2.

It is no more than justice to say that the faults of Lord Mahon's book are precisely the faults which time seldom fails to cure, and that the book, in spite of those faults, is a valuable addition to our historical literature.

Whoever wishes to be well acquainted with the morbid anatomy of governments, whoever wishes to know how great states may be made feeble and wretched, should study the history of Spain. The empire of Philip the Second was undoubtedly one of the most powerful and splendid that ever existed in the world. In Europe, he ruled Spain, Portugal, the Netherlands on both sides of the Rhine, Franche Comté, Roussillon, the Milanese, and the two Sicilies. Tuscany, Parma, and the other small states of Italy, were as completely dependent on him as the Nizam and the Rajah of Berar now are on the East India Company.[1] In Asia, the King of Spain was master of the Philippines and of all those rich settlements which the Portuguese had made on the coast of Malabar and Coromandel, in the Peninsula of Malacca, and in the Spice-islands of the Eastern Archipelago. In America his dominions extended on each side of the equator into the temperate zone. There is reason to believe that his annual revenue amounted, in the season of his greatest power, to a sum near ten times as large as that which England yielded to Elizabeth.[2] He had a standing army of fifty thousand excellent troops, at a time when England had not a single battalion in constant pay. His ordinary naval force consisted of a hundred and forty galleys. He held, what no other prince in modern times has held, the dominion both of the land and of the sea. During the greater part of his reign, he was supreme on both elements. His soldiers marched up to the capital of France; his ships menaced the shores of England.

It is no exaggeration to say that, during several years, his power over Europe was greater than even that of Napoleon.[3] The influence of the French conqueror never extended beyond low-water mark. The narrowest strait was to his power what it was of old believed that a running stream was to the sorceries of a witch. While his army entered every metropolis from Moscow to Lisbon, the English fleets blockaded every port from Dantzic to Trieste. Sicily, Sardinia, Majorca, Guernsey, enjoyed security through the whole course of a war which endangered every throne on the Continent. The victorious and imperial nation which had filled its museums with the spoils of Antwerp, of Florence, and of Rome, was suffering painfully from want of luxuries which use had made necessaries. While pillars and arches were rising to commemorate the French conquests, the conquerors were trying to manufacture coffee out of succory and sugar out of beet-root. The influence of Philip on the continent was as great as that of Napoleon. The Emperor of Germany was his kinsman.[1] France, torn by religious dissensions, was never a formidable opponent, and was sometimes a dependent ally. At the same time, Spain had what Napoleon desired in vain, ships, colonies, and commerce.[2] She long monopolised the trade of America and of the Indian Ocean. All the gold of the West, and all the spices of the East, were received and distributed by her. During many years of war, her commerce was interrupted only by the predatory enterprises of a few roving privateers. Even after the defeat of the Armada, English statesmen continued to look with great dread on the maritime power of Philip. "The King of Spain," said the Lord Keeper to the two Houses in 1593, "since he hath usurped upon the kingdom of Portugal, hath thereby grown mighty, by gaining the East Indies: so as, how great soever he was before, he is now thereby manifestly more great: . . . . He keepeth a navy armed to impeach all trade of merchandise from England to Gascoigne and Guienne, which he attempted to do this last vintage; so as he is now become as a frontier enemy to all the west of England, as well as all the south parts, as Sussex, Hampshire, and the Isle of Wight. Yea, by means of his interest in St. Maloes, a port

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[1] The Nizam of Hyderabad is still the greatest feudatory prince of India. But the state of Berar was annexed by Lord Dalhousie in 1853 upon the failure of issue of the reigning house and is now comprised in the Central Provinces.

[2] The revenue of Elizabeth never exceeded £500,000 a year. The revenue of Philip in his first and most prosperous years may, perhaps, have been as large as Macaulay suggests, but then the great bulk of it was drawn from America, the Netherlands and the Italian possessions. Spain was already declining in wealth, and the Cortes over and over declared the inability of the people to pay even a moderate amount.

[3] Philip's naval power, though in large measure fictitious, was greater than Napoleon's. But the geographical situation of Spain, the state of the military art

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and the many unsound places in the Spanish body politic made his military power far inferior. Napoleon entered in triumph most of the capitals of Europe. Philip could not conquer Holland and Zeeland.

[1] The imperial crown had passed from Charles V. to his brother Ferdinand. Thus the emperors contemporary with Philip were his cousins.

[2] After the surrender of Ulm Napoleon, addressing himself to the Austrian officers, said: "Ce ne sont pas de nouveaux états que je désire sur le continent, ce sont des vaisseaux, des colonies, du commerce que je veux avoir" (Thiers, *Histoire du Consulat et de l'Empire*, liv., xxii.).

full of shipping for the war, he is a dangerous neighbour to the Queen's isles of Jersey and Guernsey ancient possessions of this crown, and never conquered in the greatest wars with France." [1]

The ascendency which Spain then had in Europe was, in one sense, well deserved. It was an ascendency which had been gained by unquestioned superiority in all the arts of policy and of war. In the sixteenth century, Italy was not more decidedly the land of the fine arts, Germany was not more decidedly the land of bold theological speculation, than Spain was the land of statesmen and of soldiers. The character which Virgil has ascribed to his countrymen might have been claimed by the grave and haughty chiefs, who surrounded the throne of Ferdinand the Catholic, and of his immediate successors. That majestic art, "regere imperio populos," [2] was not better understood by the Romans in the proudest days of their republic, than by Gonsalvo [3] and Ximenes,[4] Cortes and Alva.[5] The skill of the Spanish diplomatists was renowned throughout Europe. In England the name of Gondomar [6] is still remembered. The sovereign nation was unrivalled both in regular and irregular warfare. The impetuous chivalry of France, the serried phalanx of Switzerland, were alike found wanting when brought face to face with the Spanish infantry. In the wars of the New World, where something different from ordinary strategy was required in the general and something different from ordinary discipline in the soldier, where it was every day necessary to meet by some new expedient the varying tactics of a barbarous enemy, the Spanish adventurers, sprung from the common people, displayed a fertility of resource, and a talent for negotiation and command, to which history scarcely affords a parallel.[7]

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[1] The dynasty of Aviz, which had ruled Portugal since 1385, having expired in 1580 Philip claimed the Portuguese crown by descent and took possession of the kingdom. The Lord Keeper, it must be remembered, was making a case for energetic action.

[2] *Æneid*, bk. vi., 851.

[3] For Gonsalvo see p. 99.

[4] Ximenes or Jimenes de Cisneros, 1436-1517, was one of the most vigorous of clerical statesmen. After acting as confessor to Queen Isabella, he became Archbishop of Toledo in 1495 and received a cardinal's hat in 1507. In 1509 he fitted out an expedition which captured the city of Oran on the Barbary coast, and in 1516, on the death of Ferdinand, he acted as Regent of Castile until the young King, Charles, could arrive. He founded the University of Alcala.

[5] Can it be said that the conqueror of Mexico and the governor of the Netherlands were wise rulers even in the Virgilian sense?

[6] Don Diego Sarmiento de Acuña, Count of Gondomar, Ambassador to England during the years 1613 to 1622, completely dominated the mind of James I.

[7] In war and diplomacy the Spaniards were certainly foremost, but in the art of government, in legislation, administration and finance they were far inferior to the

The Castilian of those times was to the Italian what the Roman, in the days of the greatness of Rome, was to the Greek. The conqueror had less ingenuity, less taste, less delicacy of perception than the conquered; but far more pride, firmness, and courage, a more solemn demeanour, a stronger sense of honour. The subject had more subtlety in speculation, the ruler more energy in action. The vices of the former were those of a coward; the vices of the latter were those of a tyrant. It may be added, that the Spaniard, like the Roman, did not disdain to study the arts and the language of those whom he oppressed. A revolution took place in the literature of Spain, not unlike that revolution which, as Horace tells us, took place in the poetry of Latium: "Capta ferum victorem cepit."[1] The slave took prisoner the enslaver. The old Castilian ballads gave place to sonnets in the style of Petrarch, and to heroic poems in the stanza of Ariosto, as the national songs of Rome were driven out by imitations of Theocritus, and translations from Menander.

In no modern society, not even in England during the reign of Elizabeth, has there been so great a number of men eminent at once in literature and in the pursuits of active life, as Spain produced during the sixteenth century. Almost every distinguished writer was also distinguished as a soldier or a politician. Boscan[2] bore arms with high reputation. Garcilaso de Vega,[3] the author of the sweetest and most graceful pastoral poem of modern times, after a short but splendid military career, fell sword in hand at the head of a storming party. Alonzo de Ercilla[4] bore a conspicuous part in that war of Arauco, which he afterwards celebrated in one of the best heroic poems that Spain has produced. Hurtado de Mendoza,[5] whose poems have been

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Romans and even to the rival nations. Under Philip II. the imperial nation itself was declining in prosperity, and under his successors everything fell to pieces.

[1] "Græcia capta ferum victorem cepit, et artes
Intulit agresti Latio."
—*Epistles*, bk. ii., ep. i., lines 156, 157.

[2] Juan Almogaver Boscan, 1500-1543, served in the Italian wars of Charles V. He was one of the first to reform Spanish poetry in accordance with Italian models.

[3] Garcilasso de la Vega, 1503-1536, took part in the battle of Pavia in 1525 and the attack on Tunis in 1535. He met his death in the Spanish invasion of Provence whilst storming a tower held by some peasants. The poem to which Macaulay refers is his first eclogue.

[4] Alonzo d'Ercilla Y Cuniga, 1533-1595, went out to Chili in 1554 with other volunteers to put down the rebellion of the warlike Indians of Arauco. In this war he displayed marvellous courage and address. The epic which it inspired he entitled *Araucana.*

[5] Diego Hurtado de Mendoza, 1503-1575, a soldier, a statesman, a scholar, a poet and a historian, acted as the Ambassador of Charles V. to Venice, to the

compared to those of Horace, and whose charming little novel is evidently the model of Gil Blas, has been handed down to us by history as one of the sternest of those iron proconsuls who were employed by the House of Austria to crush the lingering public spirit of Italy. Lope[1] sailed in the Armada; Cervantes was wounded at Lepanto.

It is curious to consider with how much awe our ancestors in those times regarded a Spaniard. He was, in their apprehension, a kind of dæmon, horribly malevolent, but withal most sagacious and powerful. "They be verye wyse and politicke," says an honest Englishman, in a memorial addressed to Mary, "and can, thorowe ther wysdome, reform and brydell theyr owne natures for a tyme, and applye their conditions to the maners of those men with whom they meddell gladlye by friendshippe; whose mischievous maners a man shall never knowe untyll he come under ther subjection: but then shall he parfectlye parceyve and fele them: which thynge I praye God England never do: for in dissimulations untyll they have ther purposes, and afterwards in oppression and tyrannye, when they can obtayne them, they do exceed all other nations upon the earthe." This is just such language as Arminius[2] would have used about the Romans, or as an Indian statesman of our times might use about the English. It is the language of a man burning with hatred, but cowed by those whom he hates; and painfully sensible of their superiority, not only in power, but in intelligence.

But how art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, that didst weaken the nations! If we overleap a hundred years, and look at Spain towards the close of the seventeenth century, what a change do we find! The contrast is as great as that which the Rome of Gallienus and Honorius presents to the Rome of Marius and Cæsar. Foreign conquest had begun to eat into every part of that gigantic monarchy on which the sun never set. Holland was gone, and Portugal, and Artois, and Roussillon, and Franche Comté. In the East, the empire founded by the

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Council of Trent and to Pope Julius III. He was also much employed in Tuscany to suppress revolt against the rulers supported by Spain. The novel to which Macaulay refers is Mendoza's *Lazarillo de Tórmes.*

[1] Lope Felix de Vega Carpio, 1562-1635, a universal and most productive poet, the founder of the Spanish drama, and author, it is said, of 2,200 plays.

[2] Arminius, or, as he is sometimes called, Hermann, Prince of the Cherusci, who took the chief part in the great rebellion of the Germans against Rome, A.D. 9, and baffled all the efforts of the Romans to reconquer Germany.

Dutch far surpassed in wealth and splendour that which their old tyrants still retained. In the West, England had seized, and still held, settlements in the midst of the Mexican sea.

The mere loss of territory was, however, of little moment. The reluctant obedience of distant provinces generally costs more than it is worth. Empires which branch out widely are often more flourishing for a little timely pruning. Adrian acted judiciously when he abandoned the conquests of Trajan;[1] and England was never so rich, so great, so formidable to foreign princes, so absolutely mistress of the sea, as since the loss of her American colonies. The Spanish Empire was still, in outward appearance, great and magnificent. The European dominions subject to the last feeble Prince of the House of Austria were far more extensive than those of Lewis the Fourteenth. The American dependencies of the Castilian crown still extended far to the North of Cancer and far to the South of Capricorn. But within this immense body there was an incurable decay, an utter want of tone, an utter prostration of strength. An ingenious and diligent population, eminently skilled in arts and manufactures, had been driven into exile by stupid and remorseless bigots.[2] The glory of the Spanish pencil had departed with Velasquez and Murillo.[3] The splendid age of Spanish literature had closed with Solis[4] and Calderon.[5] During the seventeenth century many states had formed great military establishments. But the Spanish army, so formidable under the command of Alva and Farnese, had dwindled away to a few thousand men, ill paid and ill disciplined. England, Holland, and France had great navies. But the Spanish navy was scarcely equal to the tenth part of that mighty force which, in the time of Philip the Second, had been the terror of the Atlantic and the Mediterranean. The arsenals were deserted. The magazines were unprovided. The frontier fortresses were ungarrisoned. The police was utterly inefficient for the protection of the people. Murders were committed in the face of day with perfect impunity. Bravoes and discarded serving-men, with swords at their sides, swaggered every day through the most public streets and squares of the capital, disturbing the public peace, and setting at defiance the ministers of justice. The finances were in frightful disorder. The people paid much. The government received little. The American viceroys and the farmers of the revenue became rich, while the merchants broke, while the peasantry starved, while the body-servants of the sovereign remained unpaid, while the soldiers of the royal guard repaired daily to the doors of convents, and battled there with the crowd of beggars for a porringer of broth and a morsel of bread. Every remedy which was tried aggravated the disease. The currency was altered; and this frantic measure produced its never-failing effects. It destroyed all credit, and increased the misery which it was intended to relieve. The American gold, to use the words of Ortiz,[1] was to the necessities of the state but as a drop of water to the lips of a man raging with thirst. Heaps of unopened despatches accumulated in the offices, while the Ministers were concerting with bedchamber-women and Jesuits the means of tripping up each other. Every foreign power could plunder and insult with impunity the heir of Charles the Fifth. Into such a state had the mighty kingdom of Spain fallen, while one of its smallest dependencies, a country not so large as the province of Estremadura or Andalusia, situated under an inclement sky, and preserved only by artificial means from the inroads of the ocean, had become a power of the first class, and treated on terms of equality with the courts of London and Versailles.

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[1] Trajan had extended the Roman Empire to the Persian Gulf; Hadrian reduced it to its former frontier of the Euphrates.

[2] In the course of 1609 and 1610 the Moriscoes, or converted Moors, were banished from Spain to the number of, perhaps, 500,000. They were the most industrious husbandmen and craftsmen of Valencia and Grenada.

[3] Velasquez died in 1660, Murillo in 1682.

[4] Antonio de Solis, 1610-1686, was a dramatist and a historian. His chief work was the *History of the Conquest of Mexico.*

[5] Calderon de la Barca, 1600-1687, is ranked with or even above Lope as the greatest of Spanish dramatic poets.

The manner in which Lord Mahon explains the financial situation of Spain by no means satisfies us. "It will be found," says he, "that those individuals deriving their chief income from mines, whose yearly produce is uncertain and varying, and seems rather to spring from fortune than to follow industry, are usually careless, unthrifty, and irregular in their expenditure. The example of Spain might tempt us to apply the same remark to states."[2] Lord Mahon would find it difficult, we suspect, to make out his analogy. Nothing could be more uncertain and varying than the gains and losses of those who were in the habit of putting into the state lotteries. But no part of the public income was more certain than that which was derived from the lotteries. We believe that this case is very similar to that of the American mines. Some veins of ore exceeded expectation; some fell below it. Some of the private speculators drew blanks, and others gained prizes. But the revenue of the state depended, not on any particular vein, but on the whole annual produce of two great continents. This annual produce seems to have been almost constantly on the increase during the seventeenth century. The Mexican mines were, through the reigns of Philip the Fourth and Charles the Second, in a steady course of improvement; and in South America, though the district of Potosi was not so productive as formerly, other places more than made up for the deficiency. We very much doubt whether Lord Mahon can prove that the income which the Spanish government derived from the mines of America fluctuated more than the income derived from the internal taxes of Spain itself.

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[1] L. F. Ortiz, author of the *Compendio de la Historia de España*, a general history of Spain much in vogue when this essay was written.

[2] *War of the Succession in Spain*, ch. i.

All the causes of the decay of Spain resolve themselves into one cause, bad government. The valour, the intelligence, the energy which, at the close of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth century, had made the Spaniards the first nation in the world, were the fruits of the old institutions of Castile and Arragon, institutions eminently favourable to public liberty. These institutions the first Princes of the House of Austria attacked and almost wholly destroyed. Their successors expiated the crime. The effects of a change from good government to bad government is not fully felt for some time after the change has taken place. The talents and the virtues which a good constitution generates may for a time survive that constitution. Thus the reigns of princes who have established absolute monarchy on the ruins of popular forms of government often shine in history with a peculiar brilliancy. But when a generation or two has passed away, then comes signally to pass that which was written by Montesquieu, that despotic governments resemble those savages who cut down the tree in order to get at the fruit. During the first years of tyranny, is reaped the harvest sown during the last years of liberty. Thus the Augustan age was rich in great minds formed in the generation of Cicero and Cæsar. The fruits of the policy of Augustus were reserved for posterity. Philip the Second was the heir of the Cortes and of the Justiza Mayor;[1] and they left him a nation which seemed able to conquer all the world. What Philip left to his successors is well known.[1]

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[1] Both Arragon and Castile had Cortes, but the Justiza Mayor was peculiar to the Arragonese constitution. He was a great officer, appointed by the King, but removable only by the Cortes, having extraordinary power to protect the subject from oppression and even to interfere with the action of the courts of justice.

The shock which the great religious schism of the sixteenth century gave to Europe, was scarcely felt in Spain. In England, Germany, Holland, France, Denmark, Switzerland, Sweden, that shock had produced, with some temporary evil, much durable good. The principles of the Reformation had triumphed in some of those countries. The Catholic Church had maintained its ascendency in others. But though the event had not been the same in all, all had been agitated by the conflict. Even in France, in Southern Germany, and in the Catholic cantons of Switzerland, the public mind had been stirred to its inmost depths. The hold of ancient prejudice had been somewhat loosened. The Church of Rome, warned by the danger which she had narrowly escaped, had, in those parts of her dominion, assumed a milder and more liberal character. She sometimes condescended to submit her high pretensions to the scrutiny of reason, and availed herself more sparingly than in former times of the aid of the secular arm. Even when persecution was employed, it was not persecution in the worst and most frightful shape. The severities of Lewis the Fourteenth, odious as they were, cannot be compared with those which, at the first dawn of the Reformation, had been inflicted on the heretics in many parts of Europe.

The only effect which the Reformation had produced in Spain had been to make the Inquisition more vigilant and the commonalty more bigoted. The times of refreshing came to all neighbouring countries. One people alone remained, like the fleece of the Hebrew warrior, dry in the midst of that benignant and fertilizing dew. While other nations were putting away childish things, the Spaniard still thought as a child and understood as a child. Among the men of the seventeenth century, he was the man of the fifteenth century or of a still darker period, delighted to behold an *Auto da fe*, and ready to volunteer on a Crusade.

The evils produced by a bad government and a bad religion, seemed to have attained their greatest height during the last years of the seventeenth century. While the kingdom was in this deplorable state, the King, Charles, second of the name, was hastening to an early grave.[1] His days had been few and evil. He had been unfortunate in all his wars, in every part of his internal administration, and in all his domestic relations. His first wife, whom he tenderly loved, died very young. His second wife exercised great influence over him, but seems to have been regarded by him rather with fear than with love. He was childless; and his constitution was so completely shattered that, at little more than thirty years of age, he had given up all hopes of posterity. His mind was even more distempered than his body. He was sometimes sunk in listless melancholy, and sometimes harassed by the wildest and most extravagant fancies. He was not, however, wholly destitute of the feelings which became his station. His sufferings were aggravated by the thought that his own dissolution might not improbably be followed by the dissolution of his empire.

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[1] Macaulay has exaggerated the power of Spain when at the height; and he has ascribed its decay, as is his wont, too exclusively to political causes. Parliamentary institutions were not so completely decayed in Arragon and Castile as in France, where no meeting of the States-General took place between 1614 and 1789. Yet France became the most formidable power in Europe and the centre of European civilisation. The misgovernment of Spain, atrocious as it was, was a secondary cause, itself needing explanation. Probably the most potent cause of Spanish decay was the careful extirpation of all intellectual independence and therefore of all originality and seriousness.

Several princes laid claim to the succession. The King's eldest sister had married Lewis the Fourteenth.[2] The Dauphin would, therefore, in the common course of inheritance, have succeeded to the crown. But the Infanta had, at the time of her espousals, solemnly renounced, in her own name, and in that of her posterity, all claim to the succession. This renunciation had been confirmed in due form by the Cortes. A younger sister of the King had been the first wife of Leopold, Emperor of Germany.[3] She too had at her marriage renounced her claims to the Spanish crown; but the Cortes had not sanctioned the renunciation, and it was therefore considered as invalid by the Spanish jurists. The fruit of this marriage was a daughter, who had espoused the Elector of Bavaria. The Electoral Prince of Bavaria inherited her claim to the throne of Spain. The Emperor Leopold was son of a daughter of Philip the Third, and was therefore first cousin to Charles. No renunciation whatever had been exacted from his mother at the time of her marriage.

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[1] Charles II. of Spain, 1661-1700, succeeded his father, Philip IV., when only four years old. In 1679 he married the Princess Marie Louise, daughter of the Duke of Orleans and niece of Louis XIV. "She was a light-hearted creature, extremely beautiful, frankly pagan in her animal enjoyment" (Major Hume, *Spain: its Greatness and Decay*, p. 300); but ineffectual as an agent of French intrigue. She died in 1689, and in the same year Charles married the Princess Mary Anne of Neuburg, daughter of the Elector Palatine and sister-in-law of the Emperor Leopold I. She was an indefatigable politician who domineered over her sickly, half-imbecile husband.

[2] In pursuance of the Treaty of the Pyrenees (1659) Louis XIV. married Maria Theresa, eldest daughter of Philip IV. and therefore sister of Charles II.

[3] Leopold I., Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, married Margaret Theresa, younger daughter of Philip IV. Her daughter Mary married Max Emanuel, Elector of Bavaria, and had a son, Joseph Ferdinand, who died in 1699. The Emperor Leopold was the son of Ferdinand III., and Mary daughter of Philip III. of Spain.

The question was certainly very complicated. That claim which, according to the ordinary rules of inheritance, was the strongest, had been barred by a contract executed in the most binding form.[1] The claim of the Electoral Prince of Bavaria was weaker. But so also was the contract which bound him not to prosecute his claim. The only party against whom no instrument of renunciation could be produced was the party who, in respect of blood, had the weakest claim of all.

As it was clear that great alarm would be excited throughout Europe if either the Emperor or the Dauphin should become King of Spain, each of those Princes offered to waive his pretensions in favour of his second son; the Emperor, in favour of the Archduke Charles, the Dauphin, in favour of Philip Duke of Anjou.

Soon after the peace of Ryswick, William the Third and Lewis the Fourteenth determined to settle the question of the succession without consulting either Charles or the Emperor. France, England, and Holland, became parties to a treaty by which it was stipulated that the Electoral Prince of Bavaria should succeed to Spain, the Indies, and the Netherlands. The Imperial family were to be bought off with the Milanese; and the Dauphin was to have the Two Sicilies.

The great object of the King of Spain and of all his counsellors was to avert the dismemberment of the monarchy. In the hope of attaining this end, Charles determined to name a successor. A will was accordingly framed by which the crown was bequeathed to the Bavarian Prince. Unhappily, this will had scarcely been signed when the Prince died. The question was again unsettled, and presented greater difficulties than before.

A new Treaty of Partition was concluded between France, England, and Holland. It was agreed that Spain, the Indies, and the Netherlands, should descend to the Archduke Charles. In return for this great concession made by the Bourbons to a rival house, it was agreed that France should have the Milanese, or an equivalent in a more commodious situation. The equivalent in view was the province of Lorraine.[1]

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[1] But the renunciation of the crown of Spain by Maria Theresa had been made conditional on the payment of her dowry, which had never been paid, so that her claim might with some reason be regarded as still valid.

Arbuthnot,[2] some years later, ridiculed the Partition Treaty with exquisite humour and ingenuity. Every body must remember his description of the paroxysm of rage into which poor old Lord Strutt fell, on hearing that his runaway servant Nick Frog, his clothier John Bull, and his old enemy Lewis Baboon, had come with quadrants, poles, and inkhorns, to survey his estate, and to draw his will for him.[3] Lord Mahon speaks of the arrangement with grave severity. He calls it, "an iniquitous compact, concluded without the slightest reference to the welfare of the states so readily parcelled and allotted; insulting to the pride of Spain, and tending to strip that country of its hard-won conquests." The most serious part of this charge would apply to half the treaties which have been concluded in Europe quite as strongly as to the Partition Treaty. What regard was shown in the Treaty of the Pyrenees to the welfare of the people of Dunkirk and Roussillon, in the Treaty of Nimeguen to the welfare of the people of Franche Comté, in the Treaty of Utrecht to the welfare of the people of Flanders, in the treaty of 1735 to the welfare of the people of Tuscany?[4] All Europe remembers, and our latest posterity will, we fear, have reason to remember how coolly, at the last great pacification of Christendom, the people of Poland, of Norway, of Belgium, and of Lombardy, were allotted to masters whom they abhorred.[1] The statesmen who negotiated the Partition Treaty were not so far beyond their age and ours in wisdom and virtue as to trouble themselves much about the happiness of the people whom they were apportioning among foreign rulers. But it will be difficult to prove that the stipulations which Lord Mahon condemns were in any respect unfavourable to the happiness of those who were to be transferred to new sovereigns. The Neapolitans would certainly have lost nothing by being given to the Dauphin, or to the Great Turk. Addison, who visited Naples about the time at which the Partition Treaty was signed, has left us a frightful description of the misgovernment under which that part of the Spanish empire groaned.[2] As to the people of Lorraine, an union with France would have been the happiest event which could have befallen them. Lewis was already their sovereign for all purposes of cruelty and exaction. He had kept their country during many years in his own hands. At the peace of Ryswick, indeed, their Duke had been allowed to return. But the conditions which had been imposed on him made him a mere vassal of France.

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[1] Down to 1735 the Duchy of Lorraine was a province of the Holy Roman Empire, in other words, of Germany. But ever since the thirteenth century it had felt the influence of France. In 1552 Henry II. acquired Metz, Toul and Verdun. Subsequently Lorraine, as a border province, suffered severely in the conflicts of the Bourbons with the Hapsburgs and was occupied for long periods by the French forces.

[2] John Arbuthnot, 1667-1735, the son of a Scotch Episcopalian clergyman, became a doctor of medicine and went to London to seek practice. He was appointed physician to Queen Anne and gained the friendship of Swift. He was a man of some learning and much humour. He wrote the *Art of Political Lying* and the *History of John Bull* here referred to, and had the largest share in the *Memoirs of Martinus Scriblerus.*

[3] The Spanish arrogance was typified in Lord Strutt. Nick Frog was his runaway servant, the Dutch having thrown off the Spanish yoke. England supplied Spain with woollen goods, and France was the inveterate enemy of Spain. It is a moot point whether Arbuthnot invented or merely adopted the name "John Bull."

[4] By the Treaty of the Pyrenees, concluded in 1659, Spain ceded Dunkirk and Roussillon to France; by the Treaty of Nimeguen, concluded in 1678, Franche Comté was similarly transferred; by the Treaty of Utrecht what had been the Spanish Netherlands were given to the Hapsburgs, and by the Treaty of Vienna, in 1735, the Hapsburgs obtained the Duchy of Tuscany in return for the province of Lorraine which they ceded to France.

We cannot admit that the Treaty of Partition was objectionable because it "tended to strip Spain of hard-won conquests." The inheritance was so vast, and the claimants so mighty, that without some dismemberment it was scarcely possible to make a peaceable arrangement. If any dismemberment was to take place, the best way of effecting it surely was to separate from the monarchy those provinces which were at a great distance from Spain, which were not Spanish in manners, in language, or in feelings, which were both worse governed and less valuable than the old kingdoms of Castile and Arragon, and which, having always been governed by foreigners, would not be likely to feel acutely the humiliation of being turned over from one master to another.

That England and Holland had a right to interfere is plain. The question of the Spanish succession was not an internal question, but an European question. And this Lord Mahon admits. He thinks that when the evil had been done, and a French Prince was reigning at the Escurial, England and Holland were justified in attempting, not merely to strip Spain of its remote dependencies, but to conquer Spain itself; that they were justified in attempting to put, not merely the passive Flemings and Italians, but the reluctant Castilians and Asturians, under the dominion of a stranger. The danger against which the Partition Treaty was intended to guard was precisely the same danger which afterwards was made the ground of war. It will be difficult to prove that a danger which was sufficient to justify the war was insufficient to justify the provisions of the treaty. If, as Lord Mahon contends, it was better that Spain should be subjugated by main force than that she should be governed by a Bourbon, it was surely better that she should be deprived of Sicily and the Milanese than that she should be governed by a Bourbon.[1]

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[1] By the Treaty of Vienna in 1815, the bulk of Poland was vested in the Emperor of Russia, although constituted a distinct kingdom; Norway was torn from Denmark and united to Sweden; Belgium was united with Holland and Lombardy again subjected to the Hapsburgs.

[2] Addison visited Naples in 1701, and has described the misgovernment of the kingdom in his *Travels* (see the essay on Addison).

Whether the treaty was judiciously framed is quite another question. We disapprove of the stipulations. But we disapprove of them, not because we think them bad, but because we think that there was no chance of their being executed. Lewis was the most faithless of politicians. He hated the Dutch. He hated the Government which the Revolution had established in England. He had every disposition to quarrel with his new allies. It was quite certain that he would not observe his engagements, if it should be for his interest to violate them. Even if it should be for his interest to observe them, it might well be doubted whether the strongest and clearest interest would induce a man so haughty and self-willed to co-operate heartily with two governments which had always been the objects of his scorn and aversion.

When intelligence of the second Partition Treaty arrived at Madrid, it roused to momentary energy, the languishing ruler of a languishing state. The Spanish ambassador at the court of London was directed to remonstrate with the government of William; and his remonstrances were so insolent that he was commanded to leave England. Charles retaliated by dismissing the English and Dutch ambassadors. The French king, though the chief author of the Partition Treaty, succeeded in turning the whole wrath of Charles and of the Spanish people from himself, and in directing it against the two maritime powers. Those powers had now no agent at Madrid. Their perfidious ally was at liberty to carry on his intrigues unchecked; and he fully availed himself of this advantage.

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[1] Compare the defence of the Partition Treaties in the *History of England*, ch. xxiv. Undoubtedly it is one thing to rend asunder a living people; another and a very different thing to sever from a vast empire indifferent or reluctant subjects, gained and kept by military force. That the framers of the Partition Treaties were not, however, careful of national feeling is shown by the provision in the first treaty for the transfer to the French King of Guipuscoa, a genuine Spanish province, indispensable for the defence of Spain. The Partition Treaties did not originate the practice of dismembering weak states for the aggrandisement of strong ones; but they formed fresh and memorable precedents in its favour.

A long contest was maintained with varying success by the factions which surrounded the miserable King. On the side of the Imperial family was the Queen, herself a Princess of that family. With her were allied the confessor of the King, and most of the ministers. On the other side were two of the most dexterous politicians of that age, Cardinal Porto Carrero, Archbishop of Toledo, and Harcourt, the ambassador of Lewis.

Harcourt was a noble specimen of the French aristocracy in the days of its highest splendour, a finished gentleman, a brave soldier, and a skilful diplomatist. His courteous and insinuating manners, his Parisian vivacity tempered with Castilian gravity, made him the favourite of the whole court. He became intimate with the grandees. He caressed the clergy. He dazzled the multitude by his magnificent style of living. The prejudices which the people of Madrid had conceived against the French character, the vindictive feelings generated during centuries of national rivalry, gradually yielded to his arts; while the Austrian ambassador, a surly, pompous, niggardly German, made himself and his country more and more unpopular every day.

Harcourt won over the court and the city: Porto Carrero managed the King. Never were knave and dupe better suited to each other. Charles was sick, nervous, and extravagantly superstitious. Porto Carrero had learned in the exercise of his profession the art of exciting and soothing such minds; and he employed that art with the calm and demure cruelty which is the characteristic of wicked and ambitious priests.

He first supplanted the confessor. The state of the poor King, during the conflict between his two spiritual advisers, was horrible. At one time he was induced to believe that his malady was the same with that of the wretches described in the New Testament, who dwelt among the tombs, whom no chains could bind, and whom no man dared to approach. At another time a sorceress who lived in the mountains of the Asturias was consulted about his malady. Several persons were accused of having bewitched him. Porto Carrero recommended the appalling rite of exorcism, which was actually performed. The ceremony made the poor King more nervous and miserable than ever. But it served the turn of the Cardinal, who, after much secret trickery, succeeded in casting out, not the devil, but the confessor.

The next object was to get rid of the ministers. Madrid was supplied with provisions by a monopoly. The government looked after this most delicate concern as it looked after every thing else. The partisans of the House of Bourbon took advantage of the negligence of the administration. On a sudden the supply of food failed. Exorbitant prices were demanded. The people rose. The royal residence was surrounded by an immense multitude. The Queen harangued them. The priests exhibited the host. All was in vain. It was necessary to awaken the King from his uneasy sleep, and to carry him to the balcony. There a solemn promise was given that the unpopular advisers of the crown should be forthwith dismissed. The mob left the palace and proceeded to pull down the houses of the ministers. The adherents of the Austrian line were thus driven from power, and the government was intrusted to the creatures of Porto Carrero. The King left the city in which he had suffered so cruel an insult for the magnificent retreat of the Escurial. Here his hypochondriac fancy took a new turn. Like his ancestor Charles the Fifth, he was haunted by a strange curiosity to pry into the secrets of that grave to which he was hastening. In the cemetery which Philip the Second had formed beneath the pavement of the church of St. Lawrence, reposed three generations of Castilian princes. Into these dark vaults the unhappy monarch descended by torch-light, and penetrated to that superb and gloomy chamber where, round the great black crucifix, were ranged the coffins of the kings and queens of Spain. There he commanded his attendants to open the massy chests of bronze in which the relics of his predecessors decayed. He looked on the ghastly spectacle with little emotion till the coffin of his first wife was unclosed, and she appeared before him—such was the skill of the embalmer—in all her well-remembered beauty. He cast one glance on those beloved features, unseen for eighteen years, those features over which corruption seemed to have no power, and rushed from the vault, exclaiming, "She is with God; and I shall soon be with her." The awful sight completed the ruin of his body and mind. The Escurial became hateful to him; and he hastened to Aranjuez. But the shades and waters of that delicious island-garden, so fondly celebrated in the sparkling verse of Calderon, brought no solace to their unfortunate master. Having tried medicine, exercise, and amusement in vain, he returned to Madrid to die.

He was now beset on every side by the bold and skilful agents of the House of Bourbon. The leading politicians of his court assured him that Lewis, and Lewis alone, was sufficiently powerful to preserve the Spanish monarchy undivided, and that Austria would be utterly unable to prevent the Treaty of Partition from being carried into effect. Some celebrated lawyers gave it as their opinion that the act of renunciation executed by the late Queen of France ought to be construed according to the spirit, and not according to the letter. The letter undoubtedly excluded the French princes. The spirit was merely this, that ample security should be taken against the union of the French and Spanish Crowns on one head.

In all probability, neither political nor legal reasonings would have sufficed to overcome the partiality which Charles felt for the House of Austria. There had always been a close connection between the two great royal lines which sprang from the marriage of Philip and Juana.[1] Both had always regarded the French as their natural enemies. It was necessary to have recourse to religious terrors; and Porto Carrero employed those terrors with true professional skill. The King's life was drawing to a close. Would the most Catholic prince commit a great sin on the brink of the grave? And what could be a greater sin than, from an unreasonable attachment to a family name, from an unchristian antipathy to a rival house, to set aside the rightful heir of an immense monarchy? The tender conscience and the feeble intellect of Charles were strongly wrought upon by these appeals. At length Porto Carrero ventured on a master-stroke. He advised Charles to apply for counsel to the Pope.[2] The King, who, in the simplicity of his heart, considered the successor of St. Peter as an infallible guide in spiritual matters, adopted the suggestion; and Porto Carrero, who knew that his Holiness was a mere tool of France, awaited with perfect confidence the result of the application. In the answer which arrived from Rome, the King was solemnly reminded of the great account which he was soon to render, and cautioned against the flagrant injustice which he was tempted to commit. He was assured that the right was with the House of Bourbon, and reminded that his own salvation ought to be dearer to him than the House of Austria. Yet he still continued irresolute. His attachment to his family, his aversion to France, were not to be overcome even by Papal authority. At length he thought himself actually dying. Then the cardinal redoubled his efforts. Divine after divine, well tutored for the occasion, was brought to the bed of the trembling penitent. He was dying in the commission of known sin. He was defrauding his relatives. He was bequeathing civil war to his people. He yielded, and signed that memorable Testament, the cause of many calamities to Europe. As he affixed his name to the instrument, he burst into tears. "God," he said, "gives kingdoms and takes them away. I am already one of the dead."

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[1] Philip, son of the Emperor Maximilian I., married Juana, the heiress of Ferdinand and Isabella, by whom he had Charles, afterwards Charles I. of Spain, and Charles V. of the Holy Roman Empire, from whom the subsequent Kings of Spain were descended, and Ferdinand, to whom Charles surrendered the ancient possessions of the Hapsburgs and who succeeded him in the Empire. From Ferdinand the later rulers of Austria sprung.

[2] Innocent XII. (Antonio Pignatelli) who filled the Papal chair from 1691 to 1700.

The will was kept secret during the short remainder of his life. On the third of November, 1700, he expired. All Madrid crowded to the palace. The gates were thronged. The antechamber was filled with ambassadors and grandees, eager to learn what dispositions the deceased sovereign had made. At length the folding doors were flung open. The Duke of Abrantes came forth, and announced that the whole Spanish monarchy was bequeathed to Philip Duke of Anjou. Charles had directed that, during the interval which might elapse between his death and the arrival of his successor, the government should be administered by a council, of which Porto Carrero was the chief member.

Lewis acted, as the English ministers might have guessed that he would act. With scarcely the show of hesitation, he broke through all the obligations of the Partition Treaty, and accepted for his grandson the splendid legacy of Charles.[1] The new sovereign hastened to take possession of his dominions. The whole court of France accompanied him to Sceaux. His brothers escorted him to that frontier which, as they weakly imagined, was to be a frontier no longer. "The Pyrenees," said Lewis, "have ceased to exist." Those very Pyrenees, a few years later, were the theatre of a war between the heir of Lewis and the prince whom France was now sending to govern Spain.

If Charles had ransacked Europe to find a successor whose moral and intellectual character resembled his own, he could not have chosen better. Philip was not so sickly as his predecessor, but he was quite as weak, as indolent, and as superstitious; he very soon became quite as hypochondriacal and eccentric; and he was even more uxorious.[1] He was indeed a husband of ten thousand. His first object, when he became King of Spain, was to procure a wife. From the day of his marriage to the day of her death, his first object was to have her near him, and to do what she wished. As soon as his wife died, his first object was to procure another. Another was found, as unlike the former as possible. But she was a wife; and Philip was content. Neither by day nor by night, neither in sickness nor in health, neither in time of business nor in time of relaxation, did he ever suffer her to be absent from him for half an hour. His mind was naturally feeble; and he had received an enfeebling education. He had been brought up amidst the dull magnificence of Versailles. His grandfather was as imperious and as ostentatious in his intercourse with the royal family as in public acts. All those who grew up immediately under the eye of Lewis had the manners of persons who had never known what it was to be at ease. They were all taciturn, shy, and awkward. In all of them, except the Duke of Burgundy, the evil went further than the manners. The Dauphin, the Duke of Berri, Philip of Anjou,[2] were men of insignificant characters. They had no energy, no force of will. They had been so little accustomed to judge or to act for themselves that implicit dependence had become necessary to their comfort. The new King of Spain, emancipated from control, resembled that wretched German captive who, when the irons which he had worn for years were knocked off, fell prostrate on the floor of his prison. The restraints which had enfeebled the mind of the young Prince were required to support it. Till he had a wife he could do nothing; and when he had a wife he did whatever she chose.

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[1] Louis undoubtedly broke faith, but such were his temptations that it may be doubted whether any other statesman of the time would have acted differently. He could plead not merely the testament of the late King, but the wish of the immense majority of Spaniards, eager at all costs to preserve the Spanish empire intact. The Archduke Charles could never have persuaded, nor even with the help of England and Holland could he have compelled, the Spaniards to acknowledge him as King.

While this lounging, moping boy was on his way to Madrid, his grandfather was all activity. Lewis had no reason to fear a contest with the Empire single-handed. He made vigorous preparations to encounter Leopold. He overawed the States-General by means of a great army. He attempted to soothe the English government by fair professions. William was not deceived. He fully returned the hatred of Lewis; and, if he had been free to act according to his own inclinations, he would have declared war as soon as the contents of the will were known. But he was bound by constitutional restraints. Both his person and his measures were unpopular in England. His secluded life and his cold manners disgusted a people accustomed to the graceful affability of Charles the Second. His foreign accent and his foreign attachments were offensive to the national prejudices. His reign had been a season of distress, following a season of rapidly increasing prosperity. The burdens of the late war and the expense of restoring the currency had been severely felt. Nine clergymen out of ten were Jacobites at heart, and had sworn allegiance to the new dynasty, only in order to save their benefices. A large proportion of the country gentlemen belonged to the same party. The whole body of agricultural proprietors was hostile to that interest which the creation of the national debt had brought into notice, and which was believed to be peculiarly favoured by the Court, the monied interest. The middle classes were fully determined to keep out James and his family. But they regarded William only as the less of two evils; and, as long as there was no imminent danger of a counter-revolution, were disposed to thwart and mortify the sovereign by whom they were, nevertheless, ready to stand, in case of necessity, with their lives and fortunes. They were sullen and dissatisfied. "There was," as Somers expressed it in a remarkable letter to William, "a deadness and want of spirit in the nation universally."

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[1] Philip was a poor, weak creature, but he was not so deeply sunk as Charles nor quite so abject as Macaulay would lead us to suppose. He employed able men, and in his reign Spain began to emerge from the abyss into which it had sunk.

[2] Louis the Dauphin, 1661-1711, was a respectable, but narrow-minded, weak and colourless person. His eldest son, Louis, Duke of Burgundy, 1682-1712, a really pious and virtuous youth, raised high hopes which might have been disappointed had he lived to reign, for he does not appear to have possessed any commanding qualities. Philip, Duke of Anjou, displayed his weakness as King of Spain. The Dauphin's third son, Charles, Duke of Berri, 1686-1714, was good-natured, but illiterate and incapable.

Every thing in England was going on as Lewis could have wished. The leaders of the Whig party had retired from power, and were extremely unpopular on account of the unfortunate issue of the Partition Treaty. The Tories, some of whom still cast a lingering look towards St. Germain's, were in office, and had a decided majority in the House of Commons. William was so much embarrassed by the state of parties in England that he could not venture to make war on the House of Bourbon. He was suffering under a complication of severe and incurable diseases. There was every reason to believe that a few months would dissolve the fragile tie which bound up that feeble body with that ardent and unconquerable soul. If Lewis could succeed in preserving peace for a short time, it was probable that all his vast designs would be securely accomplished. Just at this crisis, the most important crisis of his life, his pride and his passions hurried him into an error, which undid all that forty years of victory and intrigue had done, which produced the dismemberment of the kingdom of his grandson, and brought invasion, bankruptcy, and famine on his own.

James the Second died at St. Germain's. Lewis paid him a farewell visit, and was so much moved by the solemn parting, and by the grief of the exiled queen, that, losing sight of all considerations of policy, and actuated, as it should seem, merely by compassion and by a not ungenerous vanity, he acknowledged the Prince of Wales as King of England.

The indignation which the Castilians had felt when they heard that three foreign powers had undertaken to regulate the Spanish succession was nothing to the rage with which the English learned that their good neighbour had taken the trouble to provide them with a king. Whigs and Tories joined in condemning the proceedings of the French Court. The cry for war was raised by the city of London, and echoed and re-echoed from every corner of the realm. William saw that his time was come. Though his wasted and suffering body could hardly move without support, his spirit was as energetic and resolute as when, at twenty-three, he bade defiance to the combined forces of England and France. He left the Hague, where he had been engaged in negotiating with the States and the Emperor a defensive treaty against the ambitious designs of the Bourbons. He flew to London. He remodelled the ministry. He dissolved the Parliament. The majority of the new House of Commons was with the King; and the most vigorous preparations were made for war.

Before the commencement of active hostilities William was no more. But the Grand Alliance of the European Princes against the Bourbons was already constructed. "The master workman died," says Mr. Burke; "but the work was formed on true mechanical principles, and it was as truly wrought."[1] On the fifteenth of May, 1702, war was proclaimed by concert at Vienna, at London, and at the Hague.

Thus commenced that great struggle by which Europe, from the Vistula to the Atlantic Ocean, was agitated during twelve years. The two hostile coalitions were, in respect of territory, wealth, and population, not unequally matched. On the one side were France, Spain, and Bavaria; on the other, England, Holland, the Empire, and a crowd of inferior Powers.

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[1] *Letters on a Regicide Peace*, letter i.

That part of the war which Lord Mahon has undertaken to relate, though not the least important, is certainly the least attractive. In Italy, in Germany, and in the Netherlands, great means were at the disposal of great generals. Mighty battles were fought. Fortress after fortress was subdued. The iron chain of the Belgian strongholds was broken. By a regular and connected series of operations extending through several years, the French were driven back from the Danube and the Po into their own provinces. The war in Spain, on the contrary, is made up of events which seem to have no dependence on each other. The turns of fortune resemble those which take place in a dream. Victory and defeat are not followed by their usual consequences. Armies spring out of nothing, and melt into nothing. Yet, to judicious readers of history, the Spanish conflict is perhaps more interesting than the campaigns of Marlborough and Eugene. The fate of the Milanese and of the Low Countries was decided by military skill. The fate of Spain was decided by the peculiarities of the national character.

When the war commenced, the young King was in a most deplorable situation. On his arrival at Madrid, he found Porto Carrero at the head of affairs, and he did not think fit to displace the man to whom he owed his crown. The Cardinal was a mere intriguer, and in no sense a statesman. He had acquired, in the Court and in the confessional, a rare degree of skill in all the tricks by which weak minds are managed. But of the noble science of government, of the sources of national prosperity, of the causes of national decay, he knew no more than his master. It is curious to observe the contrast between the dexterity with which he ruled the conscience of a foolish valetudinarian, and the imbecility which he showed when placed at the head of an empire. On what grounds Lord Mahon represents the Cardinal as a man "of splendid genius," "of vast abilities,"[1] we are unable to discover. Lewis was of a very different opinion, and Lewis was very seldom mistaken in his judgment of character. "Every body," says he, in a letter to his ambassador, "knows how incapable the Cardinal is. He is an object of contempt to his countrymen."

A few miserable savings were made, which ruined individuals without producing any perceptible benefit to the state. The police became more and more inefficient. The disorders of the capital were increased by the arrival of French adventurers, the refuse of Parisian brothels and gaming-houses. These wretches considered the Spaniards as a subjugated race whom the countrymen of the new sovereign might cheat and insult with impunity. The King sate eating and drinking all night, lay in bed all day, yawned at the council table, and suffered the most important papers to lie unopened for weeks. At length he was roused by the only excitement of which his sluggish nature was susceptible. His grandfather consented to let him have a wife. The choice was fortunate. Maria Louisa, Princess of Savoy, a beautiful and graceful girl of thirteen, already a woman in person and mind at an age when the females of colder climates are still children, was the person selected. The King resolved to give her the meeting in Catalonia. He left his capital, of which he was already thoroughly tired. At setting out he was mobbed by a gang of beggars. He, however, made his way through them, and repaired to Barcelona.

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[1] *War of the Succession in Spain*, ch. i.

Lewis was perfectly aware that the Queen would govern Philip. He, accordingly, looked about for somebody to govern the Queen. He selected the Princess Orsini[1] to be first lady of the bedchamber, no insignificant post in the household of a very young wife, and a very uxorious husband. The Princess was the daughter of a French peer, and the widow of a Spanish grandee. She was, therefore, admirably fitted by her position to be the instrument of the Court of Versailles at the Court of Madrid. The Duke of Orleans called her, in words too coarse for translation, the Lieutenant of Captain Maintenon: and the appellation was well deserved. She aspired to play in Spain the part which Madame de Maintenon[2] had played in France. But, though at least equal to her model in wit, information, and talents for intrigue, she had not that self-command, that patience, that imperturbable evenness of temper, which had raised the widow of a buffoon to be the consort of the proudest of kings. The Princess was more than fifty years old, but was still vain of her fine eyes, and her fine shape; she still dressed in the style of a girl; and she still carried her flirtations so far as to give occasion for scandal. She was, however, polite, eloquent, and not deficient in strength of mind. The bitter Saint Simon[1] owns that no person whom she wished to attach could long resist the graces of her manners and of her conversation.

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[1] "One of the cleverest old women in Europe, Anne Maria de la Tremouille, the widow of the Duke of Bracciano (Flavio Orsini) whom the French called Princesse des Ursins and the Spaniards Ursinos. She was an epitome of political knowledge and court procedure, and soon obtained complete dominion over the Queen and her young husband" (Hume, *Spain: its Greatness and Decay*, p. 322).

[2] Françoise d'Aubigny, afterwards Marquise de Maintenon, 1635-1719, when a poor and almost friendless orphan, married Paul Scarron, half man of letters and half buffoon. He died in 1660, and his widow, first becoming familiar to Louis as the governess of his children by Madame de Montespan, was at length privately married to him.

We have not time to relate how she obtained, and how she preserved, her empire over the young couple in whose household she was placed, how she became so powerful, that neither minister of Spain nor ambassador from France could stand against her, how Lewis himself was compelled to court her, how she received orders from Versailles to retire, how the Queen took part with her favourite attendant, how the King took part with the Queen, and how, after much squabbling, lying, shuffling, bullying, and coaxing, the dispute was adjusted. We turn to the events of the war.

When hostilities were proclaimed at London, Vienna, and the Hague, Philip was at Naples. He had been with great difficulty prevailed upon, by the most urgent representations from Versailles, to separate himself from his wife, and to repair without her to his Italian dominions, which were then menaced by the Emperor. The Queen acted as Regent, and, child as she was, seems to have been quite as competent to govern the kingdom as her husband or any of his ministers.

In August, 1702, an armament, under the command of the Duke of Ormond,[2] appeared off Cadiz. The Spanish authorities had no funds and no regular troops. The national spirit, however, supplied, in some degree, what was wanting. The nobles and farmers advanced money. The peasantry were formed into what the Spanish writers call bands of heroic patriots, and what General Stanhope calls "a rascally foot militia."[1] If the invaders had acted with vigour and judgment, Cadiz would probably have fallen. But the chiefs of the expedition were divided by national and professional feelings, Dutch against English, and land against sea. Sparre, the Dutch general, was sulky and perverse. Bellasys, the English general, embezzled the stores. Lord Mahon imputes the ill temper of Sparre to the influence of the republican institutions of Holland. By parity of reason, we suppose that he would impute the peculations of Bellasys to the influence of the monarchical and aristocratical institutions of England. The Duke of Ormond, who had the command of the whole expedition, proved on this occasion, as on every other, destitute of the qualities which great emergencies require.[2] No discipline was kept; the soldiers were suffered to rob and insult those whom it was most desirable to conciliate. Churches were robbed; images were pulled down; nuns were violated. The officers shared the spoil instead of punishing the spoilers; and at last the armament, loaded, to use the words of Stanhope, "with a great deal of plunder and infamy,"[3] quitted the scene of Essex's glory, leaving the only Spaniard of note who had declared for them to be hanged by his countrymen.

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[1] Louis de Rouvray, Duke of Saint-Simon, 1675-1755, after a short military career, settled down at court where he was admitted to the intimacy of the Duke of Burgundy, grandson of Louis XIV. He was also a favourite with the Duke of Orleans, and took a considerable part in public affairs when the Duke became regent. In 1721 Saint-Simon was sent as Ambassador to Spain. After the regent's death, finding his credit much reduced, he withdrew from public life and lived for the most part in the country. His voluminous *Memoirs*, which were not published for nearly forty years after his death, have always been regarded as a literary and historical treasure.

[2] James Butler, second Duke of Ormond, 1665-1745, succeeded to the title in 1688 and first made himself conspicuous by deserting James II. at Salisbury along with Prince George of Denmark. He saw some service under William III. in the Netherlands. After his Spanish expedition he became Lord-Lieutenant in Ireland. When the Tories regained power they made Ormond Captain-General in place of Marlborough. Under his command the British troops in 1712 withdrew from the allied force. In politics Ormond followed Bolingbroke and shared his fall. In 1715, having been impeached, he fled and took part in preparing the Jacobite rebellion. He spent all the rest of his life in exile.

The fleet was off the coast of Portugal, on the way back to England, when the Duke of Ormond received intelligence that the treasure-ships from America had just arrived in Europe, and had, in order to avoid his armament, repaired to the harbour of Vigo. The cargo consisted, it was said, of more than three millions sterling in gold and silver, besides much valuable merchandise. The prospect of plunder reconciled all disputes. Dutch and English, admirals and generals, were equally eager for action. The Spaniards might with the greatest ease have secured the treasure by simply landing it; but it was a fundamental law of Spanish trade that the galleons should unload at Cadiz, and at Cadiz only. The Chamber of Commerce at Cadiz, in the true spirit of monopoly, refused, even at this conjuncture, to bate one jot of its privilege. The matter was referred to the

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[1] *War of the Succession in Spain*, ch. ii., p. 51.

[2] Colonel Parnell says that Cadiz had a garrison of nine regiments of foot and 1,000 horse besides the militia. Ormond, he says, "though possessed of good judgment and of much enterprise, was deficient in firmness" (p. 25).

[3] *War of the Succession in Spain*, pp. 24, 25.

Council of the Indies. That body deliberated and hesitated just a day too long. Some feeble preparations for defence were made. Two ruined towers at the mouth of the bay of Vigo were garrisoned by a few ill-armed and untrained rustics; a boom was thrown across the entrance of the basin; and a few French ships of war, which had convoyed the galleons from America, were moored within. But all was to no purpose. The English ships broke the boom; Ormond and his soldiers scaled the forts; the French burned their ships, and escaped to the shore. The conquerors shared some millions of dollars; some millions more were sunk. When all the galleons had been captured or destroyed came an order in due form allowing them to unload.

When Philip returned to Madrid in the beginning of 1703, he found the finances more embarrassed, the people more discontented, and the hostile coalition more formidable than ever. The loss of the galleons had occasioned a great deficiency in the revenue. The Admiral of Castile, one of the greatest subjects in Europe, had fled to Lisbon and sworn allegiance to the Archduke. The King of Portugal soon after acknowledged Charles as King of Spain, and prepared to support the title of the House of Austria by arms.

On the other side, Lewis sent to the assistance of his grandson an army of twelve thousand men, commanded by the Duke of Berwick.[1] Berwick was the son of James the Second and Arabella Churchill. He had been brought up to expect the highest honours which an English subject could enjoy; but the whole course of his life was changed by the revolution which overthrew his infatuated father. Berwick became an exile, a man without a country; and from that time forward his camp was to him in the place of a country, and professional honour was his patriotism. He ennobled his wretched calling. There was a stern, cold, Brutus-like virtue in the manner in which he discharged the duties of a soldier of fortune. His military fidelity was tried by the strongest temptations, and was found invincible. At one time he fought against his uncle; at another time he fought against the cause of his brother; yet he was never suspected of treachery, or even of slackness.

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[1] James Fitz-James, Duke of Berwick, 1670-1734, although the son of the Duke of York and Arabella Churchill, was born and educated in France. He began his military education with serving in the war between the Emperor and the Turks, was made Duke of Berwick in 1687 and fought for his father in Ireland. In the general war which broke out in 1689 he served in the Netherlands against William III. and in Spain. In the War of the Spanish Succession he fought against his uncle, Marlborough, in the Netherlands, against the Allies in Spain, and against Prince Eugene in the south of France. When the Regent Orleans allied himself with George I. against Philip V., who espoused the cause of the Pretender, Berwick led a French invasion of Spain, thus warring against his brother's cause. In the War of the Polish Succession he commanded the French army which besieged Philipsbourg where he was killed by a cannon shot. Altogether he went through twenty-nine campaigns and commanded in fifteen. He was a very able, although slow and methodic, captain.

Early in 1704 an army, composed of English, Dutch, and Portuguese, was assembled on the western frontier of Spain. The Archduke Charles had arrived at Lisbon, and appeared in person at the head of his troops. The military skill of Berwick held the Allies, who were commanded by Lord Galway,[1] in check through the whole campaign. On the south, however, a great blow was struck. An English fleet, under Sir George Rooke, having on board several regiments commanded by the Prince of Hesse Darmstadt,[2] appeared before the rock of Gibraltar. That celebrated stronghold, which nature has made all but impregnable, and against which all the resources of the military art have been employed in vain, was taken as easily as if it had been an open village in a plain. The garrison went to say their prayers instead of standing on their guard. A few English sailors climbed the rock. The Spaniards capitulated;[3] and the British flag was placed on those ramparts from which the combined armies and navies of France and Spain have never been able to pull it down. Rooke proceeded to Malaga, gave battle in the neighbourhood of that port to a French squadron, and after a doubtful action returned to England.

But greater events were at hand. The English government had determined to send an expedition to Spain, under the command of Charles Mordaunt Earl of Peterborough. This man was, if not the greatest, yet assuredly the most extraordinary character of that age, the King of Sweden himself not excepted. Indeed, Peterborough may be described as a polite, learned, and amorous Charles the Twelfth.[1] His courage had all the French impetuosity, and all the English steadiness. His fertility and activity of mind were almost beyond belief. They appeared in every thing that he did, in his campaigns, in his negotiations, in his familiar correspondence, in his lightest and most unstudied conversation. He was a kind friend, a generous enemy, and in deportment a thorough gentleman. But his splendid talents and virtues were rendered almost useless to his country, by his levity, his restlessness, his irritability, his morbid craving for novelty and for excitement. His weaknesses had not only brought him, on more than one occasion, into serious trouble; but had impelled him to some actions altogether unworthy of his humane and noble nature.[2] Repose was insupportable to him. He loved to fly round Europe faster than a travelling courier. He was at the Hague one week, at Vienna the next. Then he took a fancy to see Madrid; and he had scarcely reached Madrid, when he ordered horses and set off for Copenhagen. No attendants could keep up with his speed. No bodily infirmities could confine him. Old age, disease, imminent death, produced scarcely any effect on his intrepid spirit. Just before he underwent the most horrible of surgical operations, his conversation was as sprightly as that of a young man in the full vigour of health. On the day after the operation, in spite of the entreaties of his medical advisers, he would set out on a journey. His figure was that of a skeleton. But his elastic mind supported him under fatigues and sufferings which seemed sufficient to bring the most robust man to the grave. Change of employment was as necessary to him as change of place. He loved to dictate six or seven letters at once. Those who had to transact business with him complained that though he talked with great ability on every subject, he could never be kept to the point. "Lord Peterborough," said Pope, "would say very pretty and lively things in his letters, but they would be rather too gay and wandering; whereas, were Lord Bolingbroke to write to an emperor, or to a statesman, he would fix on that point which was the most material, would set it in the strongest and finest light, and manage it so as to make it the most serviceable to his purpose."[1] What Peterborough was to Bolingbroke as a writer, he was to Marlborough as a general. He was, in truth, the last of the knights-errant, brave to temerity, liberal to profusion, courteous in his dealings with enemies, the protector of the oppressed, the adorer of women. His virtues and vices were those of the Round Table. Indeed, his character can hardly be better summed up, than in the lines in which the author of that clever little poem, *Monks and Giants,* has described Sir Tristram.

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[1] Henri de Massue de Ruvigny, 1648-1720, was the eldest son of the Marquis of Ruvigny, a distinguished Huguenot. Father and son migrated after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685. Henry entered the English army, distinguished himself in the conquest of Ireland and was created Viscount Galway in 1692. After further service in Flanders he was appointed in 1697 one of the Lords Justices in Ireland. In 1704 he went out to Portugal as Commander-in-Chief. Macaulay throughout this essay treats him as a dullard, but, on the facts adduced by Colonel Parnell, it seems clear that he was a skilful, bold and zealous commander. His failure in the autumn of 1704 seems to have been caused chiefly by the wretched commissariat system of the Portuguese.

[2] Prince George of Hesse Darmstadt 1662-1705, had entered the imperial service in 1687 and had seen much service against the Turks and the French, as well as in Ireland under William III. In 1694 he commanded an imperial contingent in Spain and in 1698 he had been appointed Viceroy of Catalonia. He was, of course, dismissed by Philip V. He advised and shared Ormond's expedition against Cadiz.

[3] Apparently this is a libel on the Spaniards. Gibraltar was not taken like an open village. The garrison were not surprised when at prayers. Although the Spaniards numbered only eighty regulars, with about five hundred militia and armed townsfolk, they fought their guns bravely against a powerful fleet, and only surrendered after a three days' conflict in which the Allies had three hundred and twenty men killed or wounded (Parnell, *War of the Succession in Spain*, pp. 43-58).

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[1] Charles XII., 1682-1718, ascended the throne of Sweden in 1797 and in a series of marvellous campaigns overthrew the coalition which had been formed against him by Peter the Great of Russia, Frederick IV. of Denmark and Augustus of Saxony and Poland. By his insane obstinacy, thirst for adventure and love of glory he not only threw away the results of his success but effected the downfall of Sweden.

[2] See the account of his behaviour relative to the attainder of Sir John Fenwick in 1696 (Macaulay, *History of England*, ch, xxii.).

> "His birth, it seems, by Merlin's calculation,
> Was under Venus, Mercury, and Mars;
> His mind with all their attributes was mixed,
> And, like those planets, wandering and unfixed.
>
> "From realm to realm he ran, and never staid:
> Kingdoms and crowns he won, and gave away:
> It seemed as if his labours were repaid
> By the mere noise and movement of the fray:
> No conquests nor acquirements had he made;
> His chief delight was, on some festive day
> To ride triumphant, prodigal, and proud,
> And shower his wealth amidst the shouting crowd.
>
> "His schemes of war were sudden, unforeseen,
> Inexplicable both to friend and foe;
> It seemed as if some momentary spleen
> Inspired the project, and impelled the blow;
> And most his fortune and success were seen
> With means the most inadequate and low;
> Most master of himself, and least encumbered,
> When overmatched, entangled, and out-numbered."[2]

In June, 1705, this remarkable man arrived in Lisbon with five thousand Dutch and English soldiers. There the Archduke embarked with a large train of attendants, whom Peterborough entertained magnificently during the voyage at his own expense. From Lisbon the armament proceeded to Gibraltar, and, having taken the Prince of Hesse Darmstadt on board, steered towards the north-east along the coast of Spain.

The first place at which the expedition touched, after leaving Gibraltar, was Altea in Valencia. The wretched misgovernment of Philip had excited great discontent throughout this province.[3]

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[1] Spence, *Anecdotes.*

[2] "Monks and Giants," by John Hookham Frere, afterwards rechristened "King Arthur and his Round Table," may be read in the second volume of his *Works* (1874). The lines quoted occur in canto i. With regard to the correctness of the character here given of Peterborough, see introduction to this essay.

[3] So far as misgovernment was concerned, the Valencians were not much worse off than the Castilians. But the ancient jealousy of Castile survived in Valencia as in Arragon, and the fact that Castile had welcomed Philip was enough to make Valencia welcome Charles.

The invaders were eagerly welcomed. The peasantry flocked to the shore, bearing provisions, and shouting, "Long live Charles the Third." The neighbouring fortress of Denia surrendered without a blow.

The imagination of Peterborough took fire. He conceived the hope of finishing the war at one blow. Madrid was but a hundred and fifty miles distant. There was scarcely one fortified place on the road. The troops of Philip were either on the frontiers of Portugal or on the coast of Catalonia. At the capital there was no military force, except a few horse who formed a guard of honour round the person of Philip. But the scheme of pushing into the heart of a great kingdom with an army of only seven thousand men, was too daring to please the Archduke. The Prince of Hesse Darmstadt, who, in the reign of the late King of Spain, had been Governor of Catalonia, and who overrated his own influence in that province, was of opinion that they ought instantly to proceed thither, and to attack Barcelona. Peterborough was hampered by his instructions, and found it necessary to submit.[1]

On the sixteenth of August the fleet arrived before Barcelona; and Peterborough found that the task assigned to him by the Archduke and the Prince was one of almost insuperable difficulty. One side of the city was protected by the sea; the other by the strong fortifications of Monjuich.[2] The walls were so extensive, that thirty thousand men would scarcely have been sufficient to invest them. The garrison was as numerous as the besieging army.[3] The best officers in the Spanish service were in the town. The hopes which the Prince of Darmstadt had formed of a general rising in Catalonia were grievously disappointed. The invaders were joined only by about fifteen hundred armed peasants, whose services cost more than they were worth.

No general was ever in a more deplorable situation than that in which Peterborough was now placed. He had always objected to the scheme of besieging Barcelona. His objections had been overruled. He had to execute a project which he had constantly represented as impracticable. His camp was divided into hostile factions, and he was censured by all. The Archduke and the Prince blamed him for not proceeding instantly to take the town; but suggested no plan by which seven thousand men could be enabled to do the work of thirty thousand. Others blamed their general for giving up his own opinion to the childish whims of Charles, and for sacrificing his men in an attempt to perform what was impossible. The Dutch commander positively declared that his soldiers should not stir: Lord Peterborough might give what orders he chose; but to engage in such a siege was madness; and the men should not be sent to certain death when there was no chance of obtaining any advantage.

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[1] According to Colonel Parnell Peterborough, far from desiring to march to Madrid, urged Charles to alter the course of the expedition to Italy (*War of the Succession in Spain*, p. 114).

[2] From Colonel Parnell's description the fortifications of Barcelona, though extensive, were not remarkably strong. Monjuich was a small fort on the south-western side, weak in itself and in no wise a citadel to the town (*War of the Succession in Spain*, p. 116).

[3] The garrison numbered 4,000 men; the allied army 10,000, exclusive of the crews of the fleet amounting to 24,000 (*War of the Succession in Spain*, p. 118).

At length, after three weeks of inaction, Peterborough announced his fixed determination to raise the siege. The heavy cannon were sent on board. Preparations were made for re-embarking the troops. Charles and the Prince of Hesse were furious; but most of the officers blamed their general for having delayed so long the measure which he had at last found it necessary to take. On the twelfth of September there were rejoicings and public entertainments in Barcelona for this great deliverance. On the following morning the English flag was flying on the ramparts of Monjuich. The genius and energy of one man had supplied the place of forty battalions.

At midnight Peterborough had called on the Prince of Hesse, with whom he had not for some time been on speaking terms. "I have resolved, sir," said the Earl, "to attempt an assault; you may accompany us, if you think fit, and see whether I and my men deserve what you have been pleased to say of us." The Prince was startled. The attempt, he said, was hopeless; but he was ready to take his share; and, without further discussion, he called for his horse.[1]

Fifteen hundred English soldiers were assembled under the Earl. A thousand more had been posted as a body of reserve, at a neighbouring convent, under the command of Stanhope. After a winding march along the foot of the hills, Peterborough and his little army reached the walls of Monjuich. There they halted till daybreak. As soon as they were descried, the enemy advanced into the outer ditch to meet them. This was the event on which Peterborough had reckoned, and for which his men were prepared. The English received the fire, rushed forward, leaped into the ditch, put the Spaniards to flight, and entered the works together with the fugitives. Before the garrison had recovered from their first surprise, the Earl was master of the outworks, had taken several pieces of cannon, and had thrown up a breastwork to defend his men. He then sent off for Stanhope's reserve. While he was waiting for this reinforcement, news arrived that three thousand men were marching from Barcelona towards Monjuich. He instantly rode out to take a view of them; but no sooner had he left his troops than they were seized with a panic. Their situation was indeed full of danger; they had been brought into Monjuich, they scarcely knew how; their numbers were small; their general was gone: their hearts failed them, and they were proceeding to evacuate the fort. Peterborough received information of these occurrences in time to stop the retreat. He galloped up to the fugitives, addressed a few words to them, and put himself at their head. The sound of his voice and the sight of his face restored all their courage, and they marched back to their former position.

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[1] According to Colonel Parnell the proposal to attack Monjuich came from the Prince of Hesse. He had offered to lead the assault in person if Peterborough would give him English troops. The assaulting party was commanded by Brigadier-General Lord Charlemont, whilst Peterborough merely superintended Stanhope with the reserve. He arrived on the scene of action after the prince's death (*War of the Succession in Spain*, pp. 126-133).

The Prince of Hesse had fallen in the confusion of the assault; but every thing else went well. Stanhope arrived; the detachment which had marched out of Barcelona retreated; the heavy cannon were disembarked, and brought to bear on the inner fortifications of Monjuich, which speedily fell. Peterborough, with his usual generosity, rescued the Spanish soldiers from the ferocity of his victorious army, and paid the last honours with great pomp to his rival the Prince of Hesse.

The reduction of Monjuich was the first of a series of brilliant exploits. Barcelona fell; and Peterborough had the glory of taking, with a handful of men, one of the largest and strongest towns of Europe. He had also the glory, not less dear to his chivalrous temper, of saving the life and honour of the beautiful Duchess of Popoli, whom he met flying with dishevelled hair from the fury of the soldiers. He availed himself dexterously of the jealousy with which the Catalonians regarded the inhabitants of Castile. He guaranteed to the province in the capital of which he was now quartered all its ancient rights and liberties, and thus succeeded in attaching the population to the Austrian cause.

The open country now declared in favour of Charles. Tarragona, Tortosa, Gerona, Lerida, San Mateo, threw open their gates. The Spanish government sent the Count of Las Torres with seven thousand men to reduce San Mateo. The Earl of Peterborough, with only twelve hundred men, raised the siege. His officers advised him to be content with this extraordinary success. Charles urged him to return to Barcelona; but no remonstrances could stop such a spirit in the midst of such a career. It was the depth of winter. The country was mountainous. The roads were almost impassable. The men were ill-clothed. The horses were knocked up. The retreating army was far more numerous than the pursuing army. But difficulties and dangers vanished before the energy of Peterborough. He pushed on, driving Las Torres before him. Nules surrendered to the mere terror of his name; and, on the fourth of February, 1706, he arrived in triumph at Valencia. There he learned that a body of four thousand men was on the march to join Las Torres. He set out at dead of night from Valencia, passed the Xucar, came unexpectedly on the encampment of the enemy, and slaughtered, dispersed, or took the whole reinforcement. The Valencians could scarcely believe their eyes when they saw the prisoners brought in.[1]

In the mean time the Courts of Madrid and Versailles, exasperated and alarmed by the fall of Barcelona and by the revolt of the surrounding country, determined to make a great effort. A large army, nominally commanded by Philip, but really under the orders of Marshal Tessé,[2] entered Catalonia. A fleet under the Count of Toulouse,[3] one of the natural children of Lewis the Fourteenth, appeared before the port of Barcelona. The city was attacked at once by sea and land. The person of the Archduke was in considerable danger. Peterborough, at the head of about three thousand men, marched with great rapidity from Valencia. To give battle, with so small a force, to a great regular army under the conduct of a Marshal of France, would have been madness. The Earl therefore made war after the fashion of the Minas [4] and Empecinados [5] of our own time. He took his post on the neighbouring mountains, harassed the enemy with incessant alarms, cut off their stragglers, intercepted their communications with the interior, and introduced supplies, both of men and provisions, into the town. He saw, however, that the only hope of the besieged was on the side of the sea. His commission from the British government gave him supreme power, not only over the army, but, whenever he should be actually on board, over the navy also. He put out to sea at night in an open boat, without communicating his design to any person. He was picked up, several leagues from the shore, by one of the ships of the English squadron. As soon as he was on board, he announced himself as first in command, and sent a pinnace with his orders to the Admiral. Had these orders been given a few hours earlier, it is probable that the whole French fleet would have been taken. As it was, the Count of Toulouse put out to sea. The port was open. The town was relieved. On the following night the enemy raised the siege and retreated to Roussillon. Peterborough returned to Valencia, a place which he preferred to every other in Spain;[1] and Philip, who had been some weeks absent from his wife, could endure the misery of separation no longer, and flew to rejoin her at Madrid.

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[1] The details of this campaign are very differently stated by Colonel Parnell.

[2] René de Froulai, Count of Tessé, 1650(?)-1725, had been a favourite of the famous minister Louvois, had served in Italy in the last war and had been created a Marshal of France in 1703. He had already commanded at the siege of Gibraltar and had defeated the Portuguese at Badajoz in 1705. Afterwards he was Ambassador at Philip's court for several years.

[3] Louis-Alexandre de Bourbon, Count of Toulouse, the third legitimated son of Louis XIV. and Madame de Montespan. He commanded in the only great sea-fight of the War of the Spanish Succession, the battle of Malaga, fought on the 24th of August, 1704.

[4] Francisco Espoz Y Mina, 1784-1835, was one of the ablest and most active of the Spanish guerilla chiefs who did so much damage to Napoleon's armies.

[5] For the Empecinado see p. 445.

At Madrid, however, it was impossible for him or for her to remain. The splendid success which Peterborough had obtained on the eastern coast of the Peninsula had inspired the sluggish Galway with emulation. He advanced into the heart of Spain.[2] Berwick retreated. Alcantara, Ciudad Rodrigo, and Salamanca fell, and the conquerors marched towards the capital.

Philip was earnestly pressed by his advisers to remove the seat of government to Burgos. The advanced guard of the allied army was already seen on the heights above Madrid. It was known that the main body was at hand. The unfortunate Prince fled with his Queen and his household. The royal wanderers, after travelling eight days on bad roads, under a burning sun, and sleeping eight nights in miserable hovels, one of which fell down and nearly crushed them both to death, reached the metropolis of Old Castile.[1] In the mean time the invaders had entered Madrid in triumph, and had proclaimed the Archduke in the streets of the imperial city. Arragon, ever jealous of the Castilian ascendency, followed the example of Catalonia. Saragossa revolted without seeing an enemy. The governor whom Philip had set over Carthagena betrayed his trust, and surrendered to the Allies the best arsenal and the last ships which Spain possessed.

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[1] According to Colonel Parnell Peterborough was tardy in leaving Valencia and more tardy in doing anything for the relief of Barcelona. He sent repeated orders to Admiral Leake to make for Valencia instead of Barcelona, but Leake preferred to comply with the archduke's urgent entreaty for succour. Peterborough joined the fleet only in order to have some share in the merit of raising the siege (*War of the Succession in Spain*, pp. 164-167).

[2] According to Colonel Parnell Galway displayed remarkable energy and skill n this invasion of Spain, managing the Portuguese generals, outmanœuvring Berwick and capturing several thousand prisoners and a hundred pieces of artillery together with immense stores (*War of the Succession in Spain*, p. 179).

Toledo had been for some time the retreat of two ambitious, turbulent and vindictive intriguers, the Queen Dowager and Cardinal Porto Carrero. They had long been deadly enemies. They had led the adverse factions of Austria and France. Each had in turn domineered over the weak and disordered mind of the late King. At length the impostures of the priest had triumphed over the blandishments of the woman; Porto Carrero had remained victorious; and the Queen had fled in shame and mortification, from the court where she had once been supreme. In her retirement she was soon joined by him whose arts had destroyed her influence. The Cardinal, having held power just long enough to convince all parties of his incompetency, had been dismissed to his See, cursing his own folly and the ingratitude of the House which he had served too well. Common interests and common enmities reconciled the fallen rivals. The Austrian troops were admitted into Toledo without opposition. The Queen Dowager flung off that mournful garb which the widow of a King of Spain wears through her whole life, and blazed forth in jewels. The Cardinal blessed the standards of the invaders in his magnificent cathedral, and lighted up his palace in honour of the great deliverance. It seemed that the struggle had terminated in favour of the Archduke, and that nothing remained for Philip but a prompt flight into the dominions of his grandfather.

So judged those who were ignorant of the character and habits of the Spanish people. There is no country in Europe which it is so easy to overrun as Spain: there is no country in Europe which it is more difficult to conquer. Nothing can be more contemptible than the regular military resistance which Spain offers to an invader; nothing more formidable than the energy which she puts forth when her regular military resistance has been beaten down. Her armies have long borne too much resemblance to mobs; but her mobs have had, in an unusual degree, the spirit of armies. The soldier, as compared with other soldiers, is deficient in military qualities; but the peasant has as much of those qualities as the soldier. In no country have such strong fortresses been taken by surprise: in no country have unfortified towns made so furious and obstinate a resistance to great armies. War in Spain has, from the days of the Romans, had a character of its own; it is a fire which cannot be raked out; it burns fiercely under the embers; and long after it has, to all seeming, been extinguished, bursts forth more violently than ever. This was seen in the last war. Spain had no army which could have looked in the face an equal number of French or Prussian soldiers; but one day laid the Prussian monarchy in the dust; one day put the crown of France at the disposal of invaders. No Jena, no Waterloo, would have enabled Joseph to reign in quiet at Madrid.

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[1] The city of Burgos.

The conduct of the Castilians throughout the War of the Succession was most characteristic. With all the odds of number and situation on their side, they had been ignominiously beaten. All the European dependencies of the Spanish crown were lost. Catalonia, Arragon, and Valencia had acknowledged the Austrian Prince. Gibraltar had been taken by a few sailors; Barcelona stormed by a few dismounted dragoons. The invaders had penetrated into the centre of the Peninsula, and were quartered at Madrid and Toledo. While these events had been in progress, the nation had scarcely given a sign of life. The rich could hardly be prevailed on to give or to lend for the support of war; the troops had shown neither discipline nor courage; and now at last, when it seemed that all was lost, when it seemed that the most sanguine must relinquish all hope, the national spirit awoke, fierce, proud, and unconquerable. The people had been sluggish when the circumstances might well have inspired hope; they reserved all their energy for what appeared to be a season of despair. Castile, Leon, Andalusia, Estremadura, rose at once; every peasant procured a firelock or a pike; the Allies were masters only of the ground on which they trod. No soldier could wander a hundred yards from the main body of the invading army without imminent risk of being poniarded. The country through which the conquerors had passed to Madrid, and which, as they thought, they had subdued, was all in arms behind them. Their communications with Portugal were cut off. In the mean time, money began, for the first time, to flow rapidly into the treasury of the fugitive King. "The day before yesterday," says the Princess Orsini, in a letter written at this time, "the priest of a village which contains only a hundred and twenty houses brought a hundred and twenty pistoles to the Queen. 'My flock,' said he, 'are ashamed to send you so little; but they beg you to believe that in this purse there are a hundred and twenty hearts faithful even to the death.' The good man wept as he spoke; and indeed we wept too. Yesterday another small village, in which there are only twenty houses, sent us fifty pistoles." [1]

While the Castilians were every where arming in the cause of Philip, the Allies were serving that cause as effectually by their mismanagement. Galway staid at Madrid, where his soldiers indulged in such boundless licentiousness that one half of them were in the hospitals. Charles remained dawdling in Catalonia. Peterborough had taken Requena, and wished to march from Valencia towards Madrid, and to effect a junction with Galway; but the Archduke refused his consent to the plan. The indignant general remained accordingly in his favourite city, on the beautiful shores of the Mediterranean, reading Don Quixote, giving balls and suppers, trying in vain to get some good sport out of the Valencian bulls, and making love, not in vain, to the Valencian women.

At length the Archduke advanced into Castile, and ordered Peterborough to join him. But it was too late. Berwick had already compelled Galway to evacuate Madrid; and, when the whole force of the Allies was collected at Guadalaxara, it was found to be decidedly inferior in numbers to that of the enemy.

Peterborough formed a plan for regaining possession of the capital. His plan was rejected by Charles. The patience of the sensitive and vainglorious hero was worn out. He had none of that serenity of temper which enabled Marlborough to act in perfect harmony with Eugene, and to endure the vexatious interference of the Dutch deputies. He demanded permission to leave the army. Permission was readily granted; and he set out for Italy.[2] That there might be some pretext for his departure, he was commissioned by the Archduke to raise a loan in Genoa, on the credit of the revenues of Spain.

From that moment to the end of the campaign the tide of fortune ran strong against the Austrian cause. Berwick had placed his army between the Allies and the frontiers of Portugal.

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[1] The Princess Orsini to Madame de Maintenon, 12th August, 1706.

[2] According to Colonel Parnell Peterborough, far from urging an advance from Valencia upon Madrid, neglected the urgent entreaties both of Charles and of Galway to that effect; made none of the necessary preparations, and, when positively ordered to join Galway, who had advanced to Guadalaxara, took with him only 400 dragoons. He had always desired to go to Italy, and his conduct incensed the Government at home (*War of the Succession in Spain*, pp. 184-187).

They retreated on Valencia, and arrived in that province, leaving about ten thousand prisoners in the hands of the enemy.

In January, 1707, Peterborough arrived at Valencia from Italy, no longer bearing a public character, but merely as a volunteer. His advice was asked, and it seems to have been most judicious. He gave it as his decided opinion that no offensive operations against Castile ought to be undertaken. It would be easy, he said, to defend Arragon, Catalonia, and Valencia, against Philip. The inhabitants of those parts of Spain were attached to the cause of the Archduke; and the armies of the House of Bourbon would be resisted by the whole population. In a short time the enthusiasm of the Castilians might abate. The government of Philip might commit unpopular acts. Defeats in the Netherlands might compel Lewis to withdraw the succours which he had furnished to his grandson. Then would be the time to strike a decisive blow. This excellent advice was rejected. Peterborough, who had now received formal letters of recall from England, departed before the opening of the campaign; and with him departed the good fortune of the Allies. Scarcely any general had ever done so much with means so small. Scarcely any general had ever displayed equal originality and boldness. He possessed, in the highest degree, the art of conciliating those whom he had subdued. But he was not equally successful in winning the attachment of those with whom he acted. He was adored by the Catalonians and Valencians; but he was hated by the prince whom he had all but made a great king, and by the generals whose fortune and reputation were staked on the same venture with his own. The English government could not understand him. He was so eccentric that they gave him no credit for the judgment which he really possessed. One day he took towns with horse-soldiers; then again he turned some hundreds of infantry into cavalry at a minute's notice. He obtained his political intelligence chiefly by means of love affairs, and filled his despatches with epigrams. The ministers thought that it would be highly impolitic to intrust the conduct of the Spanish war to so volatile and romantic a person. They therefore gave the command to Lord Galway, an experienced veteran, a man who was in war what Molière's doctors were in medicine, who thought it much more honourable to fail according to rule, than to succeed by innovation, and who would have been very much ashamed of himself if he had taken Monjuich by means so strange as those which Peterborough employed. This great commander conducted the campaign of 1707 in the most scientific manner. On the plain of Almanza he encountered the army of the Bourbons. He drew up his troops according to the methods prescribed by the best writers, and in a few hours lost eighteen thousand men, a hundred and twenty standards, all his baggage and all his artillery[1]. Valencia and Arragon were instantly conquered by the French, and, at the close of the year, the mountainous province of Catalonia was the only part of Spain which still adhered to Charles.

"Do you remember, child," says the foolish woman in the Spectator to her husband, "that the pigeon-house fell the very afternoon that our careless wench spilt the salt upon the table?" "Yes, my dear," replies the gentleman, "and the next post brought us an account of the battle of Almanza."[2] The approach of disaster in Spain had been for some time indicated by omens much clearer than the mishap of the saltcellar; an ungrateful prince, an undisciplined army, a divided council, envy triumphant over merit, a man of genius recalled, a pedant and a sluggard intrusted with supreme command. The battle of Almanza decided the fate of Spain. The loss was such as Marlborough or Eugene could scarcely have retrieved, and was certainly not to be retrieved by Stanhope[3] and Staremberg.[4]

Stanhope, who took the command of the English army in Catalonia, was a man of respectable abilities, both in military and civil affairs, but fitter, we conceive, for a second than for a first place. Lord Mahon, with his usual candour, tells us, what we believe was not known before, that his ancestor's most distinguished exploit, the conquest of Minorca, was suggested by Marlborough. Staremberg, a methodical tactician of the German school, was sent by the emperor to command in Spain. Two languid campaigns followed, during which neither of the hostile armies did any thing memorable, but during which both were nearly starved.

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[1] This account of the battle of Almanza seems to be altogether inaccurate. Galway acted rashly, perhaps, in attacking Berwick who was far superior in numbers, but he did so with the object of anticipating the Duke of Orleans who was bringing reinforcements. Galway had only 15,500 men in all. He lost 4,000 killed or wounded and 3,000 prisoners, besides a large number of stragglers, most of whom rejoined him subsequently.

[2] *Spectator*, No. 7.

[3] James Stanhope, 1673-1721, a soldier and a politician, served as a volunteer in Flanders before entering the House of Commons in 1701. In March of 1708 he was appointed Commander-in-Chief in Spain, and in September of that year he took Port Mahon, the capital of Minorca. His conduct of the war on the mainland is described by Macaulay in this essay. After his surrender at Brihuega (see p. 527) he remained some time a prisoner. Returning to England in 1712 he was made Secretary of State on the accession of George I., and in 1717 First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer. But preferring diplomacy to finance, he became once more a Secretary of State, and was created Earl Stanhope in 1718. He was, in a sense, Prime Minister. The South Sea crisis gave occasion to the Duke of Wharton to make a violent personal attack upon Stanhope, and Stanhope's excitement brought on an illness which proved fatal. He was a staunch Whig with an aristocratic bias. He repealed the Schism Act and introduced the Peerage Bill.

[4] Guido, Count of Staremberg, 1657-1736, had seen much service in the war against the Turks, had for a time commanded the imperial forces in Italy in the War of the Succession and had gained a high reputation. Colonel Parnell praises his conduct in Spain. He afterwards was Austrian Ambassador at the court of George I.

At length, in 1710, the chiefs of the Allied forces resolved to venture on bolder measures.[1] They began the campaign with a daring move, pushed into Arragon, defeated the troops of Philip at Almenara, defeated them again at Saragossa, and advanced to Madrid. The King was again a fugitive. The Castilians sprang to arms with the same enthusiasm which they had displayed in 1706. The conquerors found the capital a desert. The people shut themselves up in their houses, and refused to pay any mark of respect to the Austrian prince. It was necessary to hire a few children to shout before him in the streets. Meanwhile, the court of Philip at Valladolid was thronged by nobles and prelates. Thirty thousand people followed their King from Madrid to his new residence. Women of rank, rather than remain behind, performed the journey on foot. The peasants enlisted by thousands. Money, arms, and provisions, were supplied in abundance by the zeal of the people. The country round Madrid was infested by small parties of irregular horse. The Allies could not send off a despatch to Arragon, or introduce a supply of provisions into the capital. It was unsafe for the Archduke to hunt in the immediate vicinity of the palace which he occupied.

The wish of Stanhope was to winter in Castile. But he stood alone in the council of war; and, indeed, it is not easy to understand how the Allies could have maintained themselves, through so unpropitious a season, in the midst of so hostile a population. Charles, whose personal safety was the first object of the generals, was sent with an escort of cavalry to Catalonia in November; and in December the army commenced its retreat towards Arragon.

But the Allies had to do with a master-spirit. The King of

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[1] The disasters of Oudenarde and Malplaquet had compelled Louis to recall every French soldier from Spain, so that Philip had only Spanish troops for his defence. It was this which emboldened the Allies to take the offensive.

France had lately sent the Duke of Vendome[1] to command in Spain. This man was distinguished by the filthiness of his person, by the brutality of his demeanour, by the gross buffoonery of his conversation, and by the impudence with which he abandoned himself to the most nauseous of all vices. His sluggishness was almost incredible. Even when engaged in a campaign, he often passed whole days in his bed. His strange torpidity had been the cause of some of the most serious disasters which the armies of the House of Bourbon had sustained. But when he was roused by any great emergency, his resources, his energy, and his presence of mind, were such as had been found in no French general since the death of Luxembourg.

At this crisis, Vendome was all himself. He set out from Talavera with his troops, and pursued the retreating army of the Allies with a speed perhaps never equalled, in such a season, and in such a country. He marched night and day. He swam, at the head of his cavalry, the flooded stream of Henares, and, in a few days, overtook Stanhope, who was at Brihuega, with the left wing of the Allied army. "Nobody with me," says the English general, "imagined that they had any foot within some days' march of us; and our misfortune is owing to the incredible diligence which their army made."[2] Stanhope had but just time to send off a messenger to the centre of the army, which was some leagues from Brihuega, before Vendome was upon him. The town was invested on every side. The walls were battered with cannon. A mine was sprung under one of the gates. The English kept up a terrible fire till their powder was spent. They then fought desperately with the bayonet against overwhelming odds. They burned the houses which the assailants had taken. But all was to no purpose. The British general saw that resistance could produce only a useless carnage. He concluded a capitulation; and his gallant little army became prisoners of war on honourable terms.

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[1] Louis Joseph, Duke of Vendôme, 1654-1712, a great-grandson of Henry IV., had fought in each of the great European wars since 1672. In 1697 he had taken Barcelona. From 1702 to 1706 he had been opposed to Eugene in North Italy, where he had contributed by his carelessness to the disaster of Cassano. In 1708 he had commanded, together with the Duke of Burgundy, in the Netherlands, and the blame for the defeat of Oudenarde was variously apportioned between the two. Saint-Simon is the chief authority for his gross manner of life. Colonel Parnell defends him both as a general and as a man.

[2] Stanhope to Lord Dartmouth (Mahon, *War of the Succession in Spain*, ch. viii., p. 234). Stanhope seems to have retreated in a very careless fashion. Although he had only 2,500 men he fell fourteen miles behind Staremberg, and omitting to set outposts he was caught completely by surprise.

Scarcely had Vendome signed the capitulation, when he learned that Staremberg was marching to the relief of Stanhope. Preparations were instantly made for a general action. On the day following that on which the English had delivered up their arms, was fought the obstinate and bloody fight of Villa-Viciosa. Staremberg remained master of the field. Vendome reaped all the fruits of the battle. The Allies spiked their cannon, and retired towards Arragon. But even in Arragon they found no place to rest. Vendome was behind them. The guerilla parties were around them. They fled to Catalonia; but Catalonia was invaded by a French army from Roussillon. At length the Austrian general, with six thousand harassed and dispirited men, the remains of a great and victorious army, took refuge in Barcelona, almost the only place in Spain which still recognised the authority of Charles.

Philip was now much safer at Madrid than his grandfather at Paris. All hope of conquering Spain in Spain was at an end. But in other quarters the House of Bourbon was reduced to the last extremity. The French armies had undergone a series of defeats in Germany, in Italy, and in the Netherlands. An immense force, flushed with victory, and commanded by the greatest generals of the age, was on the borders of France. Lewis had been forced to humble himself before the conquerors. He had even offered to abandon the cause of his grandson; and his offer had been rejected. But a great turn in affairs was approaching.

The English administration which had commenced the war against the House of Bourbon was an administration composed of Tories. But the war was a Whig war. It was the favourite scheme of William, the Whig King. Lewis had provoked it by recognising, as sovereign of England, a prince peculiarly hateful to the Whigs. It had placed England in a position of marked hostility to that power from which alone the Pretender could expect efficient succour. It had joined England in the closest union to a Protestant and republican state, to a state which had assisted in bringing about the Revolution, and which was willing to guarantee the execution of the Act of Settlement. Marlborough and Godolphin found that they were more zealously supported by their old opponents than by their old associates. Those ministers who were zealous for the war were gradually converted to Whiggism. The rest dropped off, and were succeeded by Whigs. Cowper became Chancellor. Sunderland, in spite of the very just antipathy of Anne, was made Secretary of State. On the death of the Prince of Denmark a more extensive change took place. Wharton became Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and Somers President of the Council. At length the administration was wholly in the hands of the Low Church party.

In the year 1710 a violent change took place. The Queen had always been a Tory at heart. Her religious feelings were all on the side of the Established Church. Her family feelings pleaded in favour of her exiled brother. Her selfish feelings disposed her to favour the zealots of prerogative. The affection which she felt for the Duchess of Marlborough was the great security of the Whigs. That affection had at length turned to deadly aversion. While the great party which had long swayed the destinies of Europe was undermined by bedchamber women at St. James's, a violent storm gathered in the country. A foolish parson had preached a foolish sermon against the principles of the Revolution.[1] The wisest members of the government were for letting the man alone. But Godolphin, inflamed with all the zeal of a new-made Whig, and exasperated by a nickname which was applied to him in this unfortunate discourse, insisted that the preacher should be impeached. The exhortations of the mild and sagacious Somers were disregarded. The impeachment was brought; the doctor was convicted; and the accusers were ruined. The clergy came to the rescue of the persecuted clergyman. The country gentlemen came to the rescue of the clergy. A display of Tory feelings, such as England had not witnessed since the closing years of Charles the Second's reign, appalled the Ministers and gave boldness to the Queen. She turned out the Whigs, called Harley[2] and St. John[3] to power, and dissolved the Parliament. The elections went strongly against the late government. Stanhope, who had in his absence been put in nomination for Westminister, was defeated by a Tory candidate. The new Ministers, finding themselves masters of the new Parliament, were induced by the strongest motives to conclude a peace with France. The whole system of alliance in which the country was engaged was a Whig system. The general by whom the English armies had constantly been led to victory, and for whom it was impossible to find a substitute, was now, whatever he might formerly have been, a Whig general. If Marlborough were discarded it was probable that some great disaster would follow. Yet if he were to retain his command, every great action which he might perform would raise the credit of the party in opposition.

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[1] Henry Sacheverell, 1674(?)-1724, a stout adversary of dissent. His assize sermon at Derby on the 15th of August, 1709, and a sermon preached on the 5th of November in the same year before the Lord Mayor and aldermen induced the House of Commons to order his impeachment. In March of 1710 he was sentenced to the nominal punishment of three years' suspension from preaching and became a popular hero. In his sermon at St. Paul's he had alluded to Godolphin as Volpone, the name of the knavish hero in one of Jonson's comedies.

[2] Robert Harley, 1661-1724, was of Whig and Nonconformist stock, and began his public life by assisting his father to take possession of Worcester for William of Orange in 1688. He entered Parliament in 1690 and presently went into opposition, bringing in the Triennial Bill, procuring the establishment of the Land Bank and demanding the reduction of the army. Thus he gained the confidence of the Tories and became their leader. He was made Speaker in 1701 and 1702 and Secretary of State in 1704, and was one of the Commissioners for the Union with Scotland in 1706. When the Godolphin Ministry became definitely Whig Harley had to resign, but he returned to power in 1710 as a Commissioner of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer. In 1711 he was created Earl of Oxford and of Mortimer. Finally he became Lord High Treasurer, but, losing Anne's favour, was dismissed a few days before her death. Under George I. he was impeached, and remained in the Tower two years, but the impeachment failed and he was acquitted.

[3] Henry St. John, 1678-1751, entered Parliament in 1701 and supported Harley.

A peace was therefore concluded between England and the Princes of the House of Bourbon. Of that peace Lord Mahon speaks in terms of the severest reprehension. He is, indeed, an excellent Whig of the time of the first Lord Stanhope. "I cannot but pause for a moment," says he, "to observe how much the course of a century has inverted the meaning of our party nicknames, how much a modern Tory resembles a Whig of Queen Anne's reign, and a Tory of Queen Anne's reign a modern Whig." [1]

We grant one half of Lord Mahon's proposition: from the other half we altogether dissent. We allow that a modern Tory resembles, in many things, a Whig of Queen Anne's reign. It is natural that such should be the case. The worst things of one age often resemble the best things of another. A modern shopkeeper's house is as well furnished as the house of a considerable merchant in Anne's reign. Very plain people now wear finer cloth than Beau Fielding [2] or Beau Edgeworth [3] could

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He was made Secretary at War in 1704, but went out of office with Harley in 1708. Returning to power with him, St. John became Secretary of State in 1710 and was created Viscount Bolingbroke in 1712. On Harley's dismissal St. John was supreme, but Anne's death ruined his career. Dismissed by George I. and impeached, he fled to France and became Secretary of State to the Pretender. Subsequently he procured the reversal of his attainder, though not restoration to the House of Lords. He waged war with his pen against Walpole for many years, but others took the spoils and St. John never re-entered public life.

[1] *War of the Succession in Spain*, ch. ix.

[2] For Beau Fielding see vol. iii., p. 19.

[3] Beau Edgeworth was the great-grandfather of Richard Lovell, father of Maria Edgeworth. "The young man was handsome and very fond of dress. At one time, when he had actually run out all his cash, he sold the ground plot of a house in Dublin to purchase a high-crowned hat and feathers which was then the mode. He lived in high company in London and at court. Upon some occasion King Charles II. insisted upon knighting him" (*Memoirs of Richard Lovell Edgeworth*, ch. i., p. 11).

have procured in Queen Anne's reign. We would rather trust to the apothecary of a modern village than to the physician of a large town in Anne's reign. A modern boarding-school miss could tell the most learned professor of Anne's reign some things in geography, astronomy, and chemistry, which would surprise him.

The science of government is an experimental science; and therefore it is, like all other experimental sciences, a progressive science. Lord Mahon would have been a very good Whig in the days of Harley. But Harley, whom Lord Mahon censures so severely, was very Whiggish when compared even with Clarendon; and Clarendon was quite a democrat when compared with Lord Burleigh. If Lord Mahon lives, as we hope he will, fifty years longer, we have no doubt that, as he now boasts of the resemblance which the Tories of our time bear to the Whigs of the Revolution, he will then boast of the resemblance borne by the Tories of 1882 to those immortal patriots, the Whigs of the Reform Bill.

Society, we believe, is constantly advancing in knowledge. The tail is now where the head was some generations ago. But the head and the tail still keep their distance. A nurse of this century is as wise as a justice of the quorum and cust-alorum in Shallow's time.[1] The wooden spoon of this year would puzzle a senior wrangler of the reign of George the Second. A boy from the National School reads and spells better than half the knights of the shire in the October Club.[2] But there is still as wide a difference as ever between justices and nurses, senior wranglers and wooden spoons, members of Parliament and children at charity schools. In the same way, though a Tory may now be very like what a Whig was a hundred and twenty years ago, the Whig is as much in advance of the Tory as ever. The stag, in the Treatise on the Bathos, who "feared his hind feet would o'ertake the fore,"[1] was not more mistaken than Lord Mahon, if he thinks that he has really come up with the Whigs. The absolute position of the parties has been altered; the relative position remains unchanged. Through the whole of that great movement, which began before these party-names existed, and which will continue after they have become obsolete, through the whole of that great movement of which the Charter of John, the institution of the House of Commons, the extinction of Villanage, the separation from the see of Rome, the expulsion of the Stuarts, the reform of the Representative System, are successive stages, there have been, under some name or other, two sets of men, those who were before their age, and those who were behind it, those who were the wisest among their contemporaries, and those who gloried in being no wiser than their great-grandfathers. It is delightful to think, that, in due time, the last of those who straggle in the rear of the great march will occupy the place now occupied by the advanced guard. The Tory Parliament of 1710 would have passed for a most liberal Parliament in the days of Elizabeth; and there are at present few members of the Conservative Club who would not have been fully qualified to sit with Halifax and Somers at the Kit-cat.

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[1] SHALLOW: "Sir Hugh, persuade me not; I will make a Star-Chamber matter of it; if he were twenty Sir John Falstaffs, he shall not abuse Robert Shallow, esquire."
SLENDER: "In the county of Gloster, justice of peace and *coram*."
SHALLOW: "Ay, cousin Slender, and cust-alorum."
—"Merry Wives of Windsor," act i., scene 1.

[2] "We are plagued here with an October Club; that is, a set of above a hundred Parliament men of the country, who drink October beer at home, and meet every evening at a tavern near the Parliament to consult affairs and drive things on to extremes against the Whigs, to call the old ministry to account, and get off five or six heads" (Swift, *Journal to Stella*, 18th February, 1711).

Though, therefore, we admit that a modern Tory bears some resemblance to a Whig of Queen Anne's reign, we can by no means admit that a Tory of Anne's reign resembled a modern Whig. Have the modern Whigs passed laws for the purpose of closing the entrance of the House of Commons against the new interests created by trade?[2] Do the modern Whigs hold the doctrine of divine right? Have the modern Whigs laboured to exclude all Dissenters from office and power? The modern Whigs are, indeed, at the present moment, like the Tories of 1712, desirous of peace, and of close union with France. But is there no difference between the France of 1712 and the France of 1832? Is France now the stronghold of the "Popish tyranny" and the "arbitrary power" against which our ancestors fought and prayed? Lord Mahon will find, we think, that his parallel is, in all essential circumstances, as incorrect as that which

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[1] "Of the same nature is that noble mistake of a frighted stag in full chase who (saith the poet)

"'Hears his own feet, and thinks they sound like more,
And fears the hind feet will o'ertake the fore.'"
—*Treatise on the Bathos; or the Art of Sinking in Poetry.*

[2] An allusion to the statute 9 Anne, ch. 5, requiring for members of the House of Commons a qualification in landed property, namely, for a burgess an estate of at least £300, and for a knight of the shire of at least £600 a year.

Fluellen[1] drew between Macedon and Monmouth, or as that which an ingenious Tory lately discovered between Archbishop Williams and Archbishop Vernon.[2]

We agree with Lord Mahon in thinking highly of the Whigs of Queen Anne's reign. But that part of their conduct which he selects for especial praise is precisely the part which we think most objectionable. We revere them as the great champions of political and of intellectual liberty. It is true that, when raised to power, they were not exempt from the faults which power naturally engenders. It is true that they were men born in the seventeenth century, and that they were therefore ignorant of many truths which are familiar to the men of the nineteenth century. But they were, what the reformers of the Church were before them, and what the reformers of the House of Commons have been since, the leaders of their species in a right direction. It is true that they did not allow to political discussion that latitude which to us appears reasonable and safe; but to them we owe the removal of the Censorship. It is true that they did not carry the principle of religious liberty to its full extent; but to them we owe the Toleration Act.

Though, however, we think that the Whigs of Anne's reign were, as a body, far superior in wisdom and public virtue to their contemporaries the Tories, we by no means hold ourselves bound to defend all the measures of our favourite party. A life of action, if it is to be useful, must be a life of compromise. But speculation admits of no compromise. A public man is often under the necessity of consenting to measures which he dislikes, lest he should endanger the success of measures which he thinks of vital importance. But the historian lies under no such necessity. On the contrary, it is one of his most sacred duties to point out clearly the errors of those whose general conduct he admires.

It seems to us, then, that, on the great question which divided England during the last four years of Anne's reign, the Tories were in the right, and the Whigs in the wrong. That question was, whether England ought to conclude peace without exacting from Philip a resignation of the Spanish crown?

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[1] "King Henry V.," act iv., scene 7.

[2] John Williams (see vol. ii., p. 178), who became Archbishop of York in 1641, was an acute and liberal, if somewhat worldly prelate. Edward Vernon, 1757-1847, better known by the name of Harcourt which he assumed in middle life, held the same archbishopric for forty years with the esteem of the public. What likeness he bore to Williams or who discovered it I have not been able to ascertain.

The Tories of Anne's reign did really in one point resemble the Whigs of Macaulay's generation. They disliked intervention in continental politics, wished to reduce the army and put their trust in the navy as the sufficient defence of the kingdom.

No Parliamentary struggle, from the time of the Exclusion Bill to the time of the Reform Bill, has been so violent as that which took place between the authors of the Treaty of Utrecht and the War Party. The Commons were for peace; the Lords were for vigorous hostilities. The Queen was compelled to choose which of her two highest prerogatives she would exercise, whether she would create Peers, or dissolve the Parliament. The ties of party superseded the ties of neighbourhood and of blood. The members of the hostile factions would scarcely speak to each other, or bow to each other. The women appeared at the theatres bearing the badges of their political sect. The schism extended to the most remote counties of England. Talents, such as had seldom before been displayed in political controversy, were enlisted in the service of the hostile parties. On one side was Steele,[1] gay, lively, drunk with animal spirits and with factious animosity, and Addison, with his polished satire, his inexhaustible fertility of fancy, and his graceful simplicity of style. In the front of the opposite ranks appeared a darker and fiercer spirit, the apostate politician, the ribald priest, the perjured lover, a heart burning with hatred against the whole human race, a mind richly stored with images from the dunghill and the lazar-house.[2] The ministers triumphed, and the peace was concluded. Then came the reaction. A new sovereign ascended the throne. The Whigs enjoyed the confidence of the King and of the Parliament. The unjust severity with which the Tories had treated Marlborough and Walpole was more than retaliated.[3] Harley and Prior were thrown into prison; Bolingbroke and Ormond were compelled to take refuge in a foreign land. The wounds inflicted in this desperate conflict continued to rankle for many years. It was long before the members of either party could discuss the question of the peace of Utrecht with calmness and impartiality. That the Whig Ministers had sold us to the Dutch; that the Tory Ministers had sold us to the French; that the war had been carried on only to fill the pockets of Marlborough; that the peace had been concluded only to facilitate the return of the Pretender; these imputations and many others, utterly unfounded, or grossly exaggerated, were hurled backward and forward by the political disputants of the last century. In our time the question may be discussed without irritation. We will state, as concisely as possible, the reasons which have led us to the conclusion at which we have arrived.

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[1] See the essay on Addison, vol. iii., p. 353.

[2] The gross injustice of this description of Swift needs no comment.

[3] Marlborough had been deprived of all his offices and Walpole had been expelled the House of Commons and sent to the Tower on a charge of corruption.

The dangers which were to be apprehended from the peace were two; first, the danger that Philip might be induced, by feelings of private affection, to act in strict concert with the elder branch of his house, to favour the French trade at the expense of England, and to side with the French government in future wars; secondly, the danger that the posterity of the Duke of Burgundy might become extinct, that Philip might become heir by blood to the French crown, and that thus two great monarchies might be united under one sovereign.

The first danger appears to us altogether chimerical. Family affection has seldom produced much effect on the policy of princes. The state of Europe at the time of the peace of Utrecht proved that in politics the ties of interest are much stronger than those of consanguinity or affinity. The Elector of Bavaria[1] had been driven from his dominions by his father-in-law; Victor Amadeus[2] was in arms against his sons-in-law; Anne was seated on a throne from which she had assisted to push a most indulgent father. It is true that Philip had been accustomed from childhood to regard his grandfather with profound veneration. It was probable, therefore, that the influence of Lewis at Madrid would be very great. But Lewis was more than seventy years old; he could not live long; his heir was an infant in the cradle. There was surely no reason to think that the policy of the King of Spain would be swayed by his regard for a nephew whom he had never seen.

In fact, soon after the peace, the two branches of the House of Bourbon began to quarrel. A close alliance was formed between Philip and Charles, lately competitors for the Castilian crown.[3] A Spanish princess, betrothed to the King of France, was sent back in the most insulting manner to her native country;[1] and a decree was put forth by the Court of Madrid commanding every Frenchman to leave Spain. It was true that, fifty years after the peace of Utrecht, an alliance of peculiar strictness was formed between the French and Spanish governments. But both governments were actuated on that occasion, not by domestic affection, but by common interests and common enmities. Their compact, though called the Family Compact,[2] was as purely a political compact as the league of Cambrai[3] or the league of Pilnitz.[4]

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[1] Maximilian Emanuel, Elector of Bavaria, had allied himself with France at the outset of the war and had been driven from his dominions in consequence of the battle of Blenheim and by his father-in-law, the Emperor Leopold.

[2] Victor Amadeus II., 1665-1732, Duke of Savoy and first King of Sardinia, had taken part with the Allies and was therefore at war with his sons-in-law, Philip, King of Spain and the Duke of Burgundy.

[3] In 1725 Baron Ripperdá succeeded in negotiating between Spain and the emperor the Treaty of Vienna, by which the emperor, in return for commercial privileges in the Spanish dominions, undertook to assist Philip in his designs upon Italy and in the recovery of Gibraltar. This treaty was answered by the Treaty of Hanover to which France, England and Holland were parties.

The second danger was that Philip might have succeeded to the crown of his native country. This did not happen; but it might have happened; and at one time it seemed very likely to happen. A sickly child alone stood between the King of Spain and the heritage of Lewis the Fourteenth.[5] Philip, it is true, solemnly renounced his claim to the French crown. But the manner in which he had obtained possession of the Spanish crown had proved the inefficacy of such renunciations. The French lawyers declared Philip's renunciation null, as being inconsistent with the fundamental law of the realm. The French people would probably have sided with him whom they would have considered as the rightful heir. Saint Simon, though much less zealous for hereditary monarchy than most of his countrymen, and though strongly attached to the Regent, declared, in the presence of that prince, that he never would support the claims of the House of Orleans against those of the King of Spain. "If such," he said, "be my feelings, what must be the feelings of others?"[6] Bolingbroke, it is certain, was fully convinced that the renunciation was worth no more than the paper on which it was written, and demanded it only for the purpose of blinding the English Parliament and people.

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[1] It had been arranged in 1721 that Maria Anna, the infant daughter of Philip V., should be married to young Louis XV. and that she should be sent to France to be educated. But the unfriendly relations between the two courts, and the wish of those who governed France that Louis should marry a wife capable of bearing children at once, led the French to repudiate the agreement and to send back the little princess in 1724.

[2] Macaulay refers to the Family Compact of 1762. But a similar understanding had existed much earlier. Indeed, after a few years of alienation, the two branches of the House of Bourbon drew together, so that Spain became the permanent ally of France. But Spain, even after the reforms carried out by the new dynasty, was so ineffective that France gained less by her friendship than in the previous century by her enmity. Formerly the French could dismember the Spanish monarchy; they now had to protect it.

[3] See p. 95.

[4] The understanding effected in 1791 between the Emperor Leopold II. and Frederick William II. of Prussia with a view to intervention in French affairs.

[5] Louis XV., great-grandson of Louis XIV., was only six years old when he succeeded to the crown, and for some time was thought unlikely to live.

[6] Saint-Simon, *Memoirs*, ch. 520.

Yet, though it was at one time probable that the posterity of the Duke of Burgundy would become extinct, and though it is almost certain that, if the posterity of the Duke of Burgundy had become extinct, Philip would have successfully preferred his claim to the crown of France, we still defend the principle of the Treaty of Utrecht. In the first place, Charles had, soon after the battle of Villa-Viciosa, inherited, by the death of his elder brother, all the dominions of the House of Austria. Surely, if to these dominions he had added the whole monarchy of Spain, the balance of power would have been seriously endangered. The union of the Austrian dominions and Spain would not, it is true, have been so alarming an event as the union of France and Spain. But Charles was actually Emperor. Philip was not, and never might be, King of France. The certainty of the less evil might well be set against the chance of the greater evil.

But, in fact, we do not believe that Spain would long have remained under the government either of an Emperor or of a King of France. The character of the Spanish people was a better security to the nations of Europe than any will, any instrument of renunciation, or any treaty. The same energy which the people of Castile had put forth when Madrid was occupied by the Allied armies, they would have again put forth as soon as it appeared that their country was about to become a French province. Though they were no longer masters abroad, they were by no means disposed to see foreigners set over them at home. If Philip had attempted to govern Spain by mandates from Versailles, a second Grand Alliance would easily have effected what the first had failed to accomplish. The Spanish nation would have rallied against him as zealously as it had before rallied round him. And of this he seems to have been fully aware. For many years the favourite hope of his heart was that he might ascend the throne of his grandfather; but he seems never to have thought it possible that he could reign at once in the country of his adoption and in the country of his birth.

These were the dangers of the peace; and they seem to us to be of no very formidable kind. Against these dangers are to be set off the evils of war and the risk of failure. The evils of the war, the waste of life, the suspension of trade, the expenditure of wealth, the accumulation of debt, require no illustration. The chances of failure it is difficult at this distance of time to calculate with accuracy. But we think that an estimate approximating to the truth may, without much difficulty, be formed. The Allies had been victorious in Germany, Italy, and Flanders. It was by no means improbable that they might fight their way into the very heart of France. But at no time since the commencement of the war had their prospects been so dark in that country which was the very object of the struggle. In Spain they held only a few square leagues. The temper of the great majority of the nation was decidedly hostile to them. If they had persisted, if they had obtained success equal to their highest expectations, if they had gained a series of victories as splendid as those of Blenheim and Ramilies, if Paris had fallen, if Lewis had been a prisoner, we still doubt whether they would have accomplished their object. They would still have had to carry on interminable hostilities against the whole population of a country which affords peculiar facilities to irregular warfare, and in which invading armies suffer more from famine than from the sword.

We are, therefore, for the peace of Utrecht. We are indeed no admirers of the statesmen who concluded that peace. Harley, we believe, was a solemn trifler, St. John a brilliant knave. The great body of their followers consisted of the country clergy and the country gentry; two classes of men who were then inferior in intelligence to decent shopkeepers or farmers of our time. Parson Barnabas, Parson Trulliber, Sir Wilful Witwould, Sir Francis Wronghead, Squire Western, Squire Sullen,[1] such were the people who composed the main strength of the Tory party during the sixty years which followed the Revolution. It is true that the means by which the Tories came into power in 1710 were most disreputable. It is true that the manner in which they used their power was often unjust and cruel. It is true that, in order to bring about their favourite project of peace, they resorted to slander and deception, without the slightest scruple. It is true that they passed off on the British nation a renunciation which they knew to be invalid. It is true that they gave up the Catalans to the vengeance of Philip, in a manner inconsistent with humanity and national honour.[1] But on the great question of Peace or War, we cannot but think that, though their motives may have been selfish and malevolent, their decision was beneficial to the state.

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[1] It is unfair to take caricatures as types or to judge any large body of men by what the satirist says of the worst among them. The generality of the country clergy were probably as much superior to Parson Trulliber as they were inferior to the Vicar of Wakefield. Parson Barnabas and Parson Trulliber appear in Fielding's *Joseph Andrews;* Sir Wilful Witwould in Congreve's "Way of the World;" Sir Francis Wronghead in Cibber's "Provoked Husband"; Squire Western in Fielding's *Tom Jones* and Squire Sullen in Farquhar's "Beaux' Stratagem."

But we have already exceeded our limits. It remains only for us to bid Lord Mahon heartily farewell, and to assure him that, whatever dislike we may feel for his political opinions, we shall always meet him with pleasure on the neutral ground of literature.

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[1] The Catalans had enjoyed very ample liberties dating from the time when Catalonia was a virtually independent state. After the union of Castile and Arragon these liberties were often disregarded by the Kings of Spain, but never forgotten by the Catalans who cherished a bitter hatred of Castilian tyranny. Hence the circumstance that the Castilians were zealous for Philip sufficed to make the Catalans welcome Charles. In 1705 the Queen of England, in consideration of their support, had promised to secure from the King of Spain the confirmation of their rights and liberties. She now recognised Philip without exacting any such confirmation. The Catalans refused to accept Philip, but were forced to submit.

HORACE WALPOLE

OCTOBER, 1833

NOTE ON THE ESSAY

IN this essay Macaulay attacks Horace Walpole with a violence almost as unreasonable as his paradoxical assertion about Boswell, that the faults of the author account for the excellence of his writings. He fastens upon the superficial foibles of Walpole while almost ignoring his real talent. Walpole is to him "the most eccentric, the most artificial, the most fastidious, the most capricious of men." Macaulay does not perceive that Walpole's ironic disposition led him to play with his own oddities, to exaggerate and to justify them. He is angry because Walpole was keen to note the petty and ridiculous aspects of the grave business of the world. He is vexed with Walpole for disclaiming the dignity of a serious author, for ridiculing those who thought him learned, for avowing himself to be what he really was, a clever dilettante. He is more angry still because Walpole talked an aristocratic republicanism and philanthropy which were common enough in the drawing-rooms of the eighteenth century; most angry because Walpole was neither a disciplined nor a progressive Whig, was well content with the rotten boroughs, did not march with the Rockingham party, thought Burke's pamphlets too long and spoke with levity even of Russells and Cavendishes. He judges a noble of the eighteenth century in the spirit of the middle class of the nineteenth. He would almost induce us to think that he regarded a solid, commonplace, prosing member of Parliament as more valuable than the best chronicler of the most brilliant period of English social life. He turns in haste from the pleasant variety of themes afforded by Walpole's *Letters* and *Memoirs* to follow the routine of debate and the fortunes of ministers. He is ill at ease until he has put aside Horace Walpole to discuss Sir Robert and even the Pelhams.

One admirable sentence of criticism, however, this essay does contain: "No man who has written so much is so seldom tiresome." The perception of this truth should have led Macaulay to inquire more deeply how "the author of many quartos" succeeded so well in amusing his readers. Some power of mind such an achievement does imply, and Walpole's powers were very far from contemptible. Walpole may have been a trifler, but he was a highly intelligent trifler. He could discern merit in men whom he did not like. He did homage to the commanding qualities of Pitt and Carteret, although both had been bitter enemies of the father whose memory he adored. He showed a sense of what is good in literature by preferring Gray to all contemporary poets. If he thought Dante "a Methodist parson in Bedlam," he went little beyond the prejudice of the time, whilst he extolled Shakspeare in terms which even our own age would not think cold. Whatever his aversion to Voltaire and Rousseau he has repeatedly acknowledged their genius. In art also he had flashes of insight. He built Strawberry Hill, it is true, but he admired the Gothic cathedrals. He was in truth a precursor, although a shamefaced one, of the romantic movement. Nor did Walpole lack penetration in affairs of state. He felt instinctively the madness of that American policy which a grave statesman like Grenville could adopt and a wise historian like Gibbon support. If Walpole is artificial, at least he has his own conventions. His prejudices are the whims of a clever sceptic, not the badges imposed by general order upon the members of a sect or party. He is not to be fully trusted by the historian, yet no historian has done so much to keep the eighteenth century real to the men of after ages.

Perhaps the most amiable of Horace Walpole's weaknesses is his unreserved loyalty to a father so unlike himself. Macaulay could recognise Sir Robert's manly good sense, industry and patriotism. Some may think that Macaulay has not made sufficient allowance for the difficulties which beset Walpole's Administration, and others may think that he should have noticed Walpole's errors or omissions in foreign policy; but most readers of history will think his sketch both spirited and truthful. The amazing zest with which Macaulay entered into the incidents of Parliamentary warfare enlivens even those dullest of topics, antique debates and divisions. His singular skill in using literature to illustrate or adorn political history is fully displayed in this essay. It is, perhaps, abused in his portrayal of the Duke of Newcastle, where the most ridiculous anecdotes which Smollett or Walpole had heard or imagined are brought together to produce an effect so grotesque that we must believe it a caricature.

We know upon his own authority that Macaulay took considerable pains with this essay. "I was so thoroughly dissatisfied with the article as it stood at first that I completely rewrote it, altered the whole arrangement, left out ten or twelve pages in one part and added twice as many in another. I never wrote anything so slowly as the first half or so rapidly as the last half" (Macaulay to Macvey Napier, 21st October, 1833).

HORACE WALPOLE

Letters of Horace Walpole, Earl of Orford, to Sir Horace Mann, British Envoy at the Court of Tuscany. Now first published from the Originals in the Possession of the Earl of WALDGRAVE. Edited by LORD DOVER. 2 vols. 8vo. London: 1833.

WE cannot transcribe this titlepage without strong feelings of regret. The editing of these volumes was the last of the useful and modest services rendered to literature by a nobleman of amiable manners, of untarnished public and private character, and of cultivated mind. On this, as on other occasions, Lord Dover[1] performed his part diligently, judiciously, and without the slightest ostentation. He had two merits which are rarely found together in a commentator. He was content to be merely a commentator, to keep in the background, and to leave the foreground to the author whom he had undertaken to illustrate. Yet, though willing to be an attendant, he was by no means a slave; nor did he consider it as part of his duty to see no faults in the writer to whom he faithfully and assiduously rendered the humblest literary offices.

The faults of Horace Walpole's head and heart are indeed sufficiently glaring. His writings, it is true, rank as high among the delicacies of intellectual epicures as the Strasburg pies among the dishes described in the *Almanach des Gourmands.* But as the *pâté-de-foie-gras* owes its excellence to the diseases of the wretched animal which furnishes it, and would be good for nothing if it were not made of livers preternaturally swollen, so none but an unhealthy and disorganised mind could have produced such literary luxuries as the works of Walpole.[2]

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[1] George James Welbore Agar-Ellis, first Baron Dover, 1797-1833, entered the House of Commons in 1818. He supported the Catholic claims, and, when the Whigs returned to power in 1830, was made first a Privy Councillor and afterwards Chief Commissioner of Woods and Forests. But ill health cut short his political career. In 1831 he was raised to the peerage as Baron Dover.

[2] This slashing character of Walpole illustrates Macaulay's worst faults, his want of subtlety and his heavy touch.

He was, unless we have formed a very erroneous judgment of his character, the most eccentric, the most artificial, the most fastidious, the most capricious of men. His mind was a bundle of inconsistent whims and affectations. His features were covered by mask within mask. When the outer disguise of obvious affectation was removed, you were still as far as ever from seeing the real man. He played innumerable parts, and over-acted them all. When he talked misanthropy, he out-Timoned Timon. When he talked philanthropy, he left Howard at an immeasurable distance. He scoffed at courts, and kept a chronicle of their most trifling scandal; at society, and was blown about by its slightest veerings of opinion; at literary fame, and left fair copies of his private letters, with copious notes, to be published after his decease; at rank, and never for a moment forgot that he was an Honourable; at the practice of entail, and tasked the ingenuity of conveyancers to tie up his villa in the strictest settlement.

The conformation of his mind was such that whatever was little seemed to him great, and whatever was great seemed to him little. Serious business was a trifle to him, and trifles were his serious business. To chat with blue stockings, to write little copies of complimentary verses on little occasions, to superintend a private press, to preserve from natural decay the perishable topics of Ranelagh[1] and White's,[2] to record divorces and bets, Miss Chudleigh's[3] absurdities and George Selwyn's[4] good sayings, to decorate a grotesque house with pie-crust battlements,[5] to procure rare engravings and antique chimney-boards, to match odd gauntlets, to lay out a maze of walks within five acres of ground, these were the grave employments of his long life. From these he turned to politics as to an amusement. After the labours of the print-shop and the auction-room, he unbent his mind in the House of

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[1] Ranelagh Gardens in Chelsea, on the site of a villa belonging to Viscount Ranelagh, were opened in 1742 and immediately became a fashionable promenade. They are described by Walpole in a letter to Sir Horace Mann, dated the 26th of May, 1742.

[2] White's Chocolate House was established in 1698 near the lower end of St. James's Street. It was a haunt of fashionable gamesters. Later the name was taken by an aristocratic club, which removed to the house which it now occupies in the same street.

[3] Elizabeth Chudleigh, 1720-1788, maid of honour to Augusta, Princess of Wales, and afterwards Duchess of Kingston, a bold, unscrupulous woman who furnished endless matter to the gossips. She is chiefly remembered by her trial for bigamy before the House of Lords in 1776.

[4] George Augustus Selwyn, 1719-1791, the celebrated wit and man about town.

[5] Strawberry Hill, Walpole's toy Gothic villa near Twickenham.

Commons.[1] And, having indulged in the recreation of making laws and voting millions, he returned to more important pursuits, to researches after Queen Mary's comb, Wolsey's red hat, the pipe which Van Tromp smoked during his last sea-fight, and the spur which King William struck into the flank of Sorrel.[2]

In every thing in which Walpole busied himself, in the fine arts, in literature, in public affairs, he was drawn by some strange attraction from the great to the little, and from the useful to the odd. The politics in which he took the keenest interest, were politics scarcely deserving of the name. The growlings of George the Second, the flirtations of Princess Emily with the Duke of Grafton,[3] the amours of Prince Frederic and Lady Middlesex,[4] the squabbles between Gold Stick in waiting and the Master of the Buckhounds, the disagreements between the tutors of Prince George,[5] these matters engaged almost all the attention which Walpole could spare from matters more important still, from bidding for Zinckes[6] and Petitots,[7] from cheapening fragments of tapestry and handles of old lances, from joining bits of painted glass, and from setting up memorials of departed cats and dogs. While he was fetching and carrying the gossip of Kensington Palace and Carlton House, he fancied that he was engaged in politics, and when he recorded that gossip, he fancied that he was writing history.

He was, as he has himself told us, fond of faction as an amusement. He loved mischief: but he loved quiet; and he was constantly on the watch for opportunities of gratifying both his tastes at once. He sometimes contrived, without showing himself, to disturb the course of ministerial negotiations, and to spread confusion through the political circles. He does not himself pretend that, on these occasions, he was actuated by public spirit; nor does he appear to have had any private advantage in view. He thought it a good practical joke to set public men together by the ears; and he enjoyed their perplexities, their accusations, and their recriminations as a malicious boy enjoys the embarrassment of a misdirected traveller.

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[1] Walpole sat for Castle Rising from 1754 to 1757, and for Lynn from 1757 to 1768.

[2] These objects, as a matter of fact, were presents to Walpole.

[3] Amelia Sophia Eleonora, second daughter of George II., 1711-1786, and Charles Fitzroy, second Duke of Grafton and grandson of Charles II., 1679-1757 (see Walpole, *Memoirs of George the Second*, vol. i., pp. 180-182).

[4] Walpole remarks of Frederic: "His chief passion was women, but, like the rest of his race, beauty was not a necessary ingredient." Lady Middlesex, Mistress of the Robes to the Princess, "was very short, very plain and very yellow, a vain girl, full of Greek and Latin and music and painting, but neither mischievous nor political" (Walpole, *Memoirs of George the Second*, vol. i., pp. 75, 76).

[5] The squabbles between Prince George's tutors, Lord Harcourt, the Bishop of Norwich and Mr. Stone, may be read in Walpole's *Memoirs of George the Second*, vol i., pp. 283-290.

[6] Christian-Frederic Zincke, 1684-1767, was a native of Dresden, but settled early in England where he gained a reputation for painting on enamel.

[7] John Petitot, 1607-1691, a native of Geneva, was also distinguished as a painter on enamel. Charles I. and Louis XIV. were his patrons.

About politics, in the high sense of the word, he knew nothing, and cared nothing. He called himself a Whig. His father's son could scarcely assume any other name. It pleased him also to affect a foolish dislike of kings as kings, and a foolish love and admiration of rebels as rebels; and perhaps, while kings were not in danger, and while rebels were not in being, he really believed that he held the doctrines which he professed. To go no further than the letters now before us, he is perpetually boasting to his friend Mann of his aversion to royalty and to royal persons. He calls the crime of Damien "that least bad of murders, the murder of a king."[1] He hung up in his villa an engraving of the death-warrant of Charles, with the inscription "*Major Charta.*" Yet the most superficial knowledge of history might have taught him that the Restoration, and the crimes and follies of the twenty-eight years which followed the Restoration, were the effects of this Greater Charter. Nor was there much in the means by which that instrument was obtained that could gratify a judicious lover of liberty. A man must hate kings very bitterly, before he can think it desirable that the representatives of the people should be turned out of doors by dragoons, in order to get at a king's head. Walpole's Whiggism, however, was of a very harmless kind. He kept it, as he kept the old spears and helmets at Strawberry Hill, merely for show. He would just as soon have thought of taking down the arms of the ancient Templars and Hospitallers from the walls of his hall, and setting off on a crusade to the Holy Land, as of acting in the spirit of those daring warriors and statesmen, great even in their errors, whose names and seals were affixed to the warrant which he prized so highly. He liked revolution and regicide only when they were a hundred years old. His republicanism, like the courage of a bully, or the love of a fribble, was strong and ardent when there was no occasion for it, and subsided when he had an opportunity of bringing it to the proof. As soon as the revolutionary spirit really began to stir in Europe, as soon as the hatred of kings became something more than a sonorous phrase, he was frightened into a fanatical royalist, and became one of the most extravagant alarmists of those wretched times.[1] In truth, his talk about liberty, whether he knew it or not, was from the beginning a mere cant, the remains of a phraseology which had meant something in the mouths of those from whom he had learned it, but which, in his mouth, meant about as much as the oath by which the Knights of some modern orders bind themselves to redress the wrongs of all injured ladies. He had been fed in his boyhood with Whig speculations on government. He must often have seen, at Houghton[2] or in Downing Street, men who had been Whigs when it was as dangerous to be a Whig as to be a highwayman, men who had voted for the Exclusion Bill, who had been concealed in garrets and cellars after the battle of Sedgemoor, and who had set their names to the declaration that they would live and die with the Prince of Orange. He had acquired the language of these men, and he repeated it by rote, though it was at variance with all his tastes and feelings; just as some old Jacobite families persisted in praying for the Pretender, and in passing their glasses over the water decanter when they drank the King's health,[3] long after they had become loyal supporters of the government of George the Third. He was a Whig by the accident of hereditary connection; but he was essentially a courtier; and not the less a courtier, because he pretended to sneer at the objects which excited his admiration and envy. His real tastes perpetually show themselves through the thin disguise. While professing all the contempt of Bradshaw[4] or Ludlow[5] for crowned heads, he took the trouble to write a book concerning Royal Authors.[6] He pryed with the utmost anxiety into the most minute particulars relating to the Royal family. When he was a child, he was haunted with a longing to see George the First, and gave his mother no peace till she had found a way of gratifying his curiosity.[1] The same feeling, covered with a thousand disguises, attended him to the grave. No observation that dropped from the lips of Majesty seemed to him too trifling to be recorded. The French songs of Prince Frederic, compositions certainly not deserving of preservation on account of their intrinsic merit, have been carefully preserved for us by this contemner of royalty.[2] In truth, every page of Walpole's works bewrays him. This Diogenes, who would be thought to prefer his tub to a palace, and who has nothing to ask of the masters of Windsor and Versailles but that they will stand out of his light, is a gentleman-usher at heart.

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[1] Walpole to Mann, 20th April, 1757. Damien attempted to murder Louis XV., but only succeeded in wounding him slightly.

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[1] It is not surprising that the violence of the French Revolution should have shocked Walpole, then upwards of seventy years of age and feeble in health. But his denunciation, although fierce and indiscriminate, hardly equals Burke's.

[2] Houghton was Sir Robert Walpole's mansion in Norfolk.

[3] A symbolical way of saying that the rightful king was beyond the sea.

[4] John Bradshaw, 1602-1659, a barrister, was President of the High Court of Justice which condemned Charles I. At the Restoration his body was dug up and hung on the gallows.

[5] For Ludlow see p. 33.

[6] *The Catalogue of Royal and Noble Authors* published in 1758.

He had, it is plain, an uneasy consciousness of the frivolity of his favourite pursuits; and this consciousness produced one of the most diverting of his ten thousand affectations. His busy idleness, his indifference to matters which the world generally regards as important, his passion for trifles, he thought fit to dignify with the name of philosophy. He spoke of himself as of a man whose equanimity was proof to ambitious hopes and fears, who had learned to rate power, wealth, and fame at their true value, and whom the conflict of parties, the rise and fall of statesmen, the ebb and flow of public opinion, moved only to a smile of mingled compassion and disdain. It was owing to the peculiar elevation of his character that he cared about a pinnacle of lath and plaster more than about the Middlesex election, and about a miniature of Grammont more than about the American Revolution.[3] Pitt and Murray might talk themselves hoarse about trifles. But questions of government and war were too insignificant to detain a mind which was occupied in recording the scandal of club-rooms and the whispers of the back-stairs, and which was even capable of selecting and disposing chairs of ebony and shields of rhinoceros-skin.

One of his innumerable whims was an extreme unwillingness to be considered a man of letters. Not that he was indifferent to literary fame. Far from it. Scarcely any writer has ever troubled himself so much about the appearance which his works were to make before posterity. But he had set his heart on incompatible objects. He wished to be a celebrated author, and yet to be a mere idle gentleman, one of those Epicurean gods of the earth who do nothing at all, and who pass their existence in the contemplation of their own perfections. He did not like to have any thing in common with the wretches who lodged in the little courts behind St. Martin's Church,[1] and stole out on Sundays to dine with their bookseller. He avoided the society of authors. He spoke with lordly contempt of the most distinguished among them. He tried to find out some way of writing books, as M. Jourdain's father sold cloth, without derogating from his character of *Gentilhomme.* "Lui, marchand? C'est pure médisance: il ne l'a jamais été. Tout ce qu'il faisait, c'est qu'il était fort obligeant, fort officieux; et comme il se connaissait fort bien en étoffes, il en allait choisir de tous les côtés, les faisait apporter chez lui, et en donnait à ses amis pour de l'argent."[2] There are several amusing instances of Walpole's feeling on this subject in the letters now before us. Mann had complimented him on the learning which appeared in the "Catalogue of Royal and Noble Authors;" and it is curious to see how impatiently Walpole bore the imputation of having attended to any thing so unfashionable as the improvement of his mind. "I know nothing. How should I? I who have always lived in the big busy world; who lie a-bed all the morning, calling it morning as long as you please; who sup in company; who have played at faro half my life, and now at loo till two and three in the morning; who have always loved pleasure; haunted auctions. . . . How I have laughed when some of the Magazines have called me the learned gentleman. Pray don't be like the Magazines."[3] This folly might be pardoned in a boy. But a man between forty and fifty years old, as Walpole then was, ought to be quite as much ashamed of playing at loo till three every morning as of being that vulgar thing, a learned gentleman.

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[1] A little boy of ten, the son of a Prime Minister, may be excused for not having philosophy sufficient to resist the desire of seeing a real king. The story is told by Walpole in his *Reminiscences of the Courts of George the First and Second.*

[2] In the *Memoirs of George the Second* Walpole notes them not as having any merit, but as an illustration of the prince's childishness, "a mimic, the Lord knows what a mimic!—of the celebrated Duke of Orleans in imitation of whom he wrote two or three silly French songs ' (vol. ii., p. 77).

[3] Those who read Walpole's *Letters* will see that he fully understood the gravity of the Middlesex election, and still more of the American Revolution.

The literary character has undoubtedly its full share of faults, and of very serious and offensive faults. If Walpole had avoided those faults, we could have pardoned the fastidiousness with which he declined all fellowship with men of learning. But from those faults Walpole was not one jot more free than the garreteers from whose contact he shrank. Of literary meannesses and literary vices, his life and his works contain as many instances as the life and the works of any member of Johnson's club. The fact is, that Walpole had the faults of Grub Street, with a large addition from St. James's Street, the vanity, the jealousy, the irritability of a man of letters, the affected superciliousness and apathy of a man of *ton*.

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[1] St. Martin's le Grand, on a site now occupied by the General Post Office, was long a collegiate church with privilege of sanctuary. The precinct thus became a haunt of criminals, and, when it was no longer allowed to shelter them, of debtors. The sanctuary for debtors was, however, suppressed in 1697.

[2] Molière, "Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme," act iv., scene 3.

[3] Walpole to Mann, 3rd February, 1760.

His judgment of literature, of contemporary literature especially, was altogether perverted by his aristocratical feelings. No writer surely was ever guilty of so much false and absurd criticism. He almost invariably speaks with contempt of those books which are now universally allowed to be the best that appeared in his time; and, on the other hand, he speaks of writers of rank and fashion as if they were entitled to the same precedence in literature which would have been allowed to them in a drawing-room. In these letters, for example, he says that he would rather have written the most absurd lines in Lee than Thomson's Seasons.[1] The periodical paper called "The World," on the other hand, was by "our first writers."[2] Who, then, were the first writers of England in the year 1753? Walpole has told us in a note. Our readers will probably guess that Hume, Fielding, Smollet, Richardson, Johnson, Warburton, Collins, Akenside, Gray, Dyer, Young, Warton, Mason, or some of those distinguished men, were in the list. Not one of them. Our first writers, it seems, were Lord Chesterfield, Lord Bath, Mr. W. Whithed, Sir Charles Williams, Mr. Soame Jenyns, Mr. Cambridge, Mr. Coventry. Of these seven personages, Whithed was the lowest in station, but was the most accomplished tuft-hunter of his time. Coventry was of a noble family. The other five had among them two seats in the House of Lords, two seats in the House of Commons, three seats in the Privy Council, a baronetcy, a blue riband, a red riband, about a hundred thousand pounds a year, and not ten pages that are worth reading.[3] The writings of Whithed, Cambridge, Coventry, and Lord Bath are forgotten. Soame Jenyns is remembered chiefly by Johnson's review of the foolish Essay on the Origin of Evil. Lord Chesterfield stands much lower in the estimation of posterity than he would have done if his letters had never been published. The lampoons of Sir Charles Williams are now read only by the curious, and, though not without occasional flashes of wit, have always seemed to us, we must own, very poor performances.

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[1] Walpole to Mann, 29th March, 1745.

[2] Not quite accurately quoted. "The first parcel your brother sends you shall convey the other numbers of that paper, and I will mark all the names I know of the authors: there are several and of our first writers; but in general you will not find that the paper answers the idea you have entertained of it" (Walpole to Mann, 6th October, 1753). Walpole only says that the authors are "of," *i.e.*, among our first writers, and in the note the names which provoked Macaulay are followed by an etc.

[3] Lord Chesterfield has certainly more than ten pages that are worth reading. The remark that he has been lowered in the estimation of posterity by the publishing

Walpole judged of French literature after the same fashion. He understood and loved the French language. Indeed, he loved it too well. His style is more deeply tainted with Gallicism than that of any other English writer with whom we are acquainted. His composition often reads, for a page together, like a rude translation from the French. We meet every minute with such sentences as these, "One knows what temperaments Annibal Caracci painted." "The impertinent personage!" "She is dead rich." "Lord Dalkeith is dead of the small-pox in three days." "It will now be seen whether he or they are most patriot."

His love of the French language was of a peculiar kind. He loved it as having been for a century the vehicle of all the polite nothings of Europe, as the sign by which the free-masons of fashion recognised each other in every capital from Petersburgh to Naples, as the language of raillery, as the language of anecdote, as the language of memoirs, as the language of correspondence. Its higher uses he altogether disregarded. The literature of France has been to ours what Aaron was to Moses, the expositor of great truths which would else have perished for want of a voice to utter them with distinctness.[1] The relation which existed between Mr. Bentham and M. Dumont

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of his letters must be taken with Macaulay's explanation. "When I said that Chesterfield had lost by the publication of his letters, I of course considered that he had much to lose; that he has left an immense reputation founded on the testimony of all his contemporaries of all parties, for wit, taste and eloquence; that what remains of his Parliamentary oratory is superior to anything of that time that has come down to us, except a little of Pitt's" (Macaulay to Macvey Napier, 21st October, 1833).

[1] "It may surely be asked," writes Miss Berry, "whether France will subscribe to this assertion of superiority in the whole range of science? If she does, her character has undergone a greater change than any she has yet experienced in the course of all her revolutions" (Advertisement to the *Letters* addressed to the Misses Berry). That the French authors of the last century owed many of their philosophical ideas to English sources is true. That they produced so great an effect merely by giving a readable version of these ideas is a blunder at least as heinous as any that Walpole ever committed, and almost incredible in a writer with so much sense and knowledge as Macaulay.

is an exact illustration of the intellectual relation in which the two countries stand to each other. The great discoveries in physics, in metaphysics, in political science, are ours. But scarcely any foreign nation except France has received them from us by direct communication. Isolated by our situation, isolated by our manners, we found truth, but we did not impart it. France has been the interpreter between England and mankind.

In the time of Walpole, this process of interpretation was in full activity. The great French writers were busy in proclaiming through Europe the names of Bacon, of Newton, and of Locke. The English principles of toleration, the English respect for personal liberty, the English doctrine that all power is a trust for the public good, were making rapid progress. There is scarcely any thing in history so interesting as that great stirring up of the mind of France, that shaking of the foundations of all established opinions, that uprooting of old truth and old error. It was plain that mighty principles were at work whether for evil or for good. It was plain that a great change in the whole social system was at hand. Fanatics of one kind might anticipate a golden age, in which men should live under the simple dominion of reason, in perfect equality and perfect amity, without property, or marriage, or King, or God. A fanatic of another kind might see nothing in the doctrines of the philosophers but anarchy and atheism, might cling more closely to every old abuse, and might regret the good old days when St. Dominic and Simon de Montfort put down the growing heresies of Provence. A wise man would have seen with regret the excesses into which the reformers were running; but he would have done justice to their genius and to their philanthropy. He would have censured their errors; but he would have remembered that, as Milton has said, error is but opinion in the making. While he condemned their hostility to religion, he would have acknowledged that it was the natural effect of a system under which religion had been constantly exhibited to them in forms which common sense rejected and at which humanity shuddered. While he condemned some of their political doctrines as incompatible with all law, all property, and all civilisation, he would have acknowledged that the subjects of Lewis the Fifteenth had every excuse which men could have for being eager to pull down, and for being ignorant of the far higher art of setting up. While anticipating a fierce conflict, a great and wide-wasting destruction, he would yet have looked forward to the final close with a good hope for France and for mankind.

Walpole had neither hopes nor fears. Though the most Frenchified English writer of the eighteenth century, he troubled himself little about the portents which were daily to be discerned in the French literature of his time.[1] While the most eminent Frenchmen were studying with enthusiastic delight English politics and English philosophy, he was studying as intently the gossip of the old court of France. The fashions and scandal of Versailles and Marli, fashions and scandal a hundred years old, occupied him infinitely more than a great moral revolution which was taking place in his sight. He took a prodigious interest in every noble sharper whose vast volume of wig and infinite length of riband had figured at the dressing or at the tucking up of Lewis the Fourteenth, and of every profligate woman of quality who had carried her train of lovers backward and forward from king to parliament, and from parliament to king, during the wars of the *Fronde*.[2] These were the people of whom he treasured up the smallest memorial, of whom he loved to hear the most trifling anecdote, and for whose likenesses he would have given any price. Of the great French writers of his own time, Montesquieu is the only one of whom he speaks with enthusiasm.[3] And even of Montesquieu he speaks with less enthusiasm than of that abject thing, Crébillon the younger,[4] a scribbler as licentious as Louvet and as dull as Rapin. A man must be strangely constituted who can take interest in pedantic journals of the blockades laid by the Duke of A. to the hearts of the Marquise de B. and the Comtesse de C. This trash Walpole extols in language sufficiently high for the merits of Don Quixote. He wished to possess a likeness of Crébillon; and Liotard, the first painter of miniatures then living, was employed to preserve the features of the profligate dunce. The admirer of the *Sopha* and of the *Lettres Athéniennes* had little respect to spare for the men who were then at the head of French literature. He kept carefully out of their way. He tried to keep other people from paying them any attention. He could not deny that Voltaire and Rousseau were clever men; but he took every opportunity of depreciating them.[1] Of D'Alembert he spoke with a contempt which, when the intellectual powers of the two men are compared, seems exquisitely ridiculous. D'Alembert complained that he was accused of having written Walpole's squib against Rousseau. "I hope," says Walpole, "that nobody will attribute D'Alembert's works to me."[2] He was in little danger.

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[1] Walpole was not a prophet, but in his letters from Paris he shows more appreciation of the change then going forward in France than would be supposed from reading this tirade. Thus he wrote from Paris in October of 1765: "I assure you, you may come hither very safely and be in no danger from mirth. Laughing is as much out of fashion as pantins or bilboquets. Good folks, they have no time to laugh. There is God and the King to be pulled down first; and men and women, one and all, are devoutly employed in the demolition! They think me quite profane for having any belief left" (*Letters*, vol. iv., p. 425). He was indeed unsympathetic. "The *savans*—I beg their pardon, the *philosophes* are insupportable, superficial, overbearing and fanatic" (*ibid.*, p. 436). And again he remarks concerning the fashionable people: "They are ashamed to defend the Roman Catholic religion, because it is quite exploded; but I am convinced they believe it in their hearts. They hate the Parliaments and the philosophers, and are rejoiced that they may still idolise royalty" (*ibid.*, p. 466). All this is one-sided and ill-natured, but penetrating and in large measure true. It is not the language of the silly trifler painted by Macaulay.

[2] The aimless civil war which marked the minority of Louis XIV., the latest symptom of the old rebellious temper of the French nobility.

[3] "Montesquieu's *Esprit des Lois*, which I think the best book that ever was written—at least I never learned half so much from all I ever read. There is as much wit as useful knowledge" (Walpole to Mann, 10th January, 1750). "In what book in the world is there half so much wit, sentiment, delicacy, humanity?" (Walpole to Mann, 25th February, 1750.)

[4] Claude-Prosper Jolyot de Crébillon, 1707-1777, called the younger to distinguish him from his father, once celebrated as a dramatist, wrote loose romances which had much vogue in his own time and were praised even by such a man as D'Alembert.

It is impossible to deny, however, that Walpole's writings have real merit, and merit of a very rare, though not of a very high kind. Sir Joshua Reynolds used to say that, though nobody would for a moment compare Claude to Raphael, there would be another Raphael before there was another Claude. And we own that we expect to see fresh Humes and fresh Burkes before we again fall in with that peculiar combination of moral and intellectual qualities to which the writings of Walpole owe their extraordinary popularity.

It is easy to describe him by negatives. He had not a creative imagination. He had not a pure taste. He was not a great reasoner. There is indeed scarcely any writer in whose works it would be possible to find so many contradictory judgments, so many sentences of extravagant nonsense. Nor was it only in his familiar correspondence that he wrote in this flighty and inconsistent manner, but in long and elaborate books, in books repeatedly transcribed and intended for the public eye. We will give an instance or two; for without instances readers not very familiar with his works will scarcely understand our meaning. In the Anecdotes of Painting, he states, very truly, that the art declined after the commencement of the civil wars.[1] He proceeds to inquire why this happened. The explanation, we should have thought, would have been easily found. He might have mentioned the loss of a king who was the most munificent and judicious patron that the fine arts have ever had in England, the troubled state of the country, the distressed condition of many of the aristocracy, perhaps also the austerity of the victorious party. These circumstances, we conceive, fully account for the phænomenon. But this solution was not odd enough to satisfy Walpole. He discovers another cause for the decline of the art, the want of models. Nothing worth painting, it seems, was left to paint. "How picturesque," he exclaims, "was the figure of an Anabaptist!"—as if puritanism had put out the sun and withered the trees; as if the civil wars had blotted out the expression of character and passion from the human lip and brow; as if many of the men whom Vandyke painted had not been living in the time of the Commonwealth, with faces little the worse for wear; as if many of the beauties afterwards portrayed by Lely were not in their prime before the Restoration; as if the garb or the features of Cromwell and Milton were less picturesque than those of the round-faced peers, as like each other as eggs to eggs, who look out from the middle of the periwigs of Kneller. In the Memoirs, again, Walpole sneers at the Prince of Wales, afterwards George the Third, for presenting a collection of books to one of the American colleges during the Seven Years' War, and says that, instead of books, his Royal Highness ought to have sent arms and ammunition; as if a war ought to suspend all study and all education; or as if it were the business of the Prince of Wales to supply the colonies with military stores out of his own pocket.[2] We have perhaps dwelt too long on these passages; but we have done so because they are specimens of Walpole's manner.

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[1] Walpole did not like Voltaire, who, he considered, had not behaved well to him (Miss Berry). Yet he thought that Voltaire's *Tancred* had "great flashes of genius" (*Letters*, vol. iii., p. 383), and he described Voltaire's *Universal History* as "a marvellous mass both of genius and sagacity and the quintessence of political wisdom as well as of history" (*Letters*, vol. ix., p. 235).

[2] Not very accurately or fairly quoted. "D'Alembert might be offended at Rousseau's ascribing my letter to him: and he is in the right. I am a very indifferent author; and there is nothing so vexatious to an indifferent author as to be confounded with another of the same class. I should be sorry to have his eloges and translations of scraps of Tacitus laid to me" (Walpole to Hume, 6th November, 1766). This implies no depreciation of D'Alembert's real greatness as a man of science.

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[1] "What the fury of Henry VIII. had spared was condemned by the Puritans; ruin was their harvest and they gleaned after the reformers. Had they countenanced any of the softer arts, what could those arts have represented? How picturesque was the figure of an Anabaptist!" (*Anecdotes of Painting*, ch. xii.)

[2] *Memoirs of the Reign of King George the Second*, vol. iii., p. 39.

Every body who reads his works with attention will find that they swarm with loose and foolish observations like those which we have cited; observations which might pass in conversation or in a hasty letter, but which are unpardonable in books deliberately written and repeatedly corrected.

He appears to have thought that he saw very far into men; but we are under the necessity of altogether dissenting from his opinion. We do not conceive that he had any power of discerning the finer shades of character. He practised an art, however, which, though easy and even vulgar, obtains for those who practise it the reputation of discernment with ninety-nine people out of a hundred. He sneered at every body, put on every action the worst construction which it would bear, "spelt every man backward," to borrow the Lady Hero's phrase,

> "Turned every man the wrong side out,
> And never gave to truth and virtue that
> Which simpleness and merit purchaseth."[1]

In this way any man may, with little sagacity and little trouble, be considered by those whose good opinion is not worth having as a great judge of character.

It is said that the hasty and rapacious Kneller used to send away the ladies who sate to him as soon as he had sketched their faces, and to paint the figure and hands from his housemaid. It was in much the same way that Walpole portrayed the minds of others. He copied from the life only those glaring and obvious peculiarities which could not escape the most superficial observation. The rest of the canvass he filled up, in a careless dashing way, with knave and fool, mixed in such proportions as pleased Heaven. What a difference between these daubs and the masterly portraits of Clarendon!

There are contradictions without end in the sketches of character which abound in Walpole's works. But if we were to form our opinion of his eminent contemporaries from a general survey of what he has written concerning them, we should say that Pitt was a strutting, ranting, mouthing actor, Charles Townshend an impudent and voluble jack-pudding, Murray a demure, cold-blooded, cowardly hypocrite, Hardwicke an insolent upstart, with the understanding of a pettifogger and the heart of a hangman, Temple an impertinent poltroon, Egmont a solemn coxcomb, Lyttelton a poor creature whose only wish was to go to heaven in a coronet, Onslow a pompous proser, Washington a braggart,

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[1] "Much Ado about Nothing," act iii., scene 1.

Lord Camden sullen, Lord Townshend malevolent, Secker an atheist who had shammed Christian for a mitre, Whitefield an impostor who swindled his converts out of their watches.[1] The Walpoles fare little better than their neighbours. Old Horace is constantly represented as a coarse, brutal, niggardly buffoon, and his son as worthy of such a father. In short, if we are to trust this discerning judge of human nature, England in his time contained little sense and no virtue, except what was distributed between himself, Lord Waldgrave,[2] and Marshal Conway.[3]

Of such a writer it is scarcely necessary to say, that his works are destitute of every charm which is derived from elevation, or from tenderness of sentiment. When he chose to be humane and magnanimous,—for he sometimes, by way of variety, tried this affectation,—he overdid his part most ludicrously. None of his many disguises sat so awkwardly upon him. For example, he tells us that he did not choose to be intimate with Mr. Pitt. And why? Because Mr. Pitt had been among the persecutors of his father? Or because, as he repeatedly assures us, Mr. Pitt was a disagreeable man in private life? Not at all; but because Mr. Pitt was too fond of war, and was great with too little reluctance.[4] Strange that a habitual scoffer like Walpole should imagine that this cant could impose on the dullest reader! If Molière had put such a speech into the mouth of Tartuffe, we should have said that the fiction was unskilful, and that Orgon could not have been such a fool as to be taken in by it.[1] Of the twenty-six years during which Walpole sat in Parliament, thirteen were years of war. Yet he did not, during all those thirteen years, utter a single word or give a single vote tending to peace.[2] His most intimate friend, the only friend, indeed, to whom he appears to have been sincerely attached, Conway, was a soldier, was fond of his profession, and was perpetually entreating Mr. Pitt to give him employment. In this Walpole saw nothing but what was admirable. Conway was a hero for soliciting the command of expeditions which Mr. Pitt was a monster for sending out.[3]

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[1] To illustrate sufficiently the violence and exaggeration of this sentence would require another essay as long as Macaulay's; but one quotation may show that Walpole could sometimes recognise merit in a contemporary. "Lord Chatham had recalled the spirit of a brave nation, had given it victory and glory, and victory secured its liberty. . . . Even the shameful peace of Paris, concluded in defiance of him, could not rob the nation of all he had acquired; nor could George the Third resign so much as Pitt had gained for George the Second. Half the empire of Hindostan, conquered under his administration by the spirit he had infused, still pours its treasure into the Thames. Canada was subdued by his councils, and Spain and France—that yet dread his name—attest the reality of his services. The memory of his eloquence, which effected all these wonders, will remain when the neglect of his contemporaries and my criticisms will be forgotten" (*Memoirs of the Reign of King George the Third*, vol. ii., ch. 17).

[2] James Waldegrave, second Earl Waldegrave, 1715-1763, was a lord of the bedchamber to George II. and became his political confidant. In 1752 the King appointed him governor to George, Prince of Wales. Although he preferred pleasure to politics, his good sense and disinterestedness, together with royal favour, gave him considerable influence with public men. In June, 1757, he became Prime Minister for a few days. Horace Walpole admired him and promoted his marriage with Maria, daughter of Sir Edward Walpole.

[3] Henry Seymour Conway, 1721-1795, was the son of Lord Conway and of Charlotte, sister of Catherine Shorter, who married Sir Robert Walpole. A brave soldier and an honourable public man, but not endowed with any commanding qualities, he would scarcely be remembered but for the space which he fills in the correspondence and memoirs of his cousin, Horace Walpole, who loved him with the most sincere affection and overrated his talents if not his virtues.

[4] "Of Pitt, he (Walpole) retained the best opinion; but the wanton exposure of so many lives at the affair of St. Cas, and in those other visionary attempts on the

What then is the charm, the irresistible charm, of Walpole's writings? It consists, we think, in the art of amusing without exciting. He never convinces the reason, or fills the imagination, or touches the heart; but he keeps the mind of the reader constantly attentive and constantly entertained. He had a strange ingenuity peculiarly his own, an ingenuity which appeared in all that he did, in his building, in his gardening, in his upholstery, in the matter and in the manner of his writings. If we were to adopt the classification, not a very accurate classification, which Akenside has given of the pleasures of the imagination, we should say that with the Sublime and the Beautiful Walpole had nothing to do, but that the third province, the Odd, was his peculiar domain. The motto which he prefixed to his Catalogue of Royal and Noble Authors might have been inscribed with perfect propriety over the door of every room in his house, and on the titlepage of every one of his books; "Dove diavolo, Messer Ludovico, avete pigliate tante coglionerie?"[4] In his villa, every apartment is a museum;

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coast of France had painted Pitt on his mind as a man whose thirst of glory was inconsistent with humanity; and being himself strongly tinctured with tenderness he avoided any further intercourse with a Minister who was great with so little reluctance" (*Memoirs of the Reign of King George the Second*, vol. iii., p. 160).

[1] In Molière's "Tartuffe" the hero is the arch-hypocrite and profligate, and Orgon the stupid, well-meaning man who gives Tartuffe every opportunity of injuring him both in honour and estate.

[2] Walpole was at best a dilettante politician without influence or following.

[3] Whether rightly or wrongly, soldiers are not supposed to criticise the wisdom or the justice of wars undertaken by the state which they serve, and are praised for their zeal whenever they press to be sent on active service. Walpole might admire his friend for wanting to risk life and limb in expeditions which the minister should not, perhaps, have sent out.

[4] "Where the deuce, Messer Ludovico, have you gathered so much nonsense?" The remark with which Cardinal Ippolito d'Este is said to have acknowledged Ariosto's gift of a copy of his great poem, the *Orlando Furioso.*

every piece of furniture is a curiosity; there is something strange in the form of the shovel; there is a long story belonging to the bell-rope. We wander among a profusion of rarities, of trifling intrinsic value, but so quaint in fashion, or connected with such remarkable names and events, that they may well detain our attention for a moment. A moment is enough. Some new relic, some new unique, some new carved work, some new enamel, is forthcoming in an instant. One cabinet of trinkets is no sooner closed than another is opened. It is the same with Walpole's writings. It is not in their utility, it is not in their beauty, that their attraction lies. They are to the works of great historians and poets, what Strawberry Hill is to the Museum of Sir Hans Sloane[1] or to the Gallery of Florence. Walpole is constantly showing us things, not of very great value indeed, yet things which we are pleased to see, and which we can see nowhere else. They are baubles; but they are made curiosities either by his grotesque workmanship or by some association belonging to them. His style is one of those peculiar styles by which every body is attracted, and which nobody can safely venture to imitate. He is a mannerist whose manner has become perfectly easy to him. His affectation is so habitual and so universal that it can hardly be called affectation. The affectation is the essence of the man. It pervades all his thoughts and all his expressions. If it were taken away, nothing would be left. He coins new words, distorts the senses of old words, and twists sentences into forms which make grammarians stare. But all this he does, not only with an air of ease, but as if he could not help doing it. His wit was, in its essential properties, of the same kind with that of Cowley and Donne. Like theirs, it consisted in an exquisite perception of points of analogy and points of contrast too subtile for common observation. Like them, Walpole perpetually startles us by the ease with which he yokes together ideas between which there would seem, at first sight, to be no connection. But he did not, like them, affect the gravity of a lecture, and draw his illustrations from the laboratory and from the schools. His tone was light and fleering; his topics were the topics of the club and the ball-room; and therefore his strange combinations and far-fetched allusions, though very closely resembling those which tire us to death in the poems of the time of Charles the First, are read with pleasure constantly new.[2]

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[1] The Museum of Sir Hans Sloane was the nucleus of what is now known as the British Museum.

[2] It is not merely because they are odd that Walpole's writings still interest us. Nothing is more wearisome than oddity, and we soon tire even of Walpole's affecta-

No man who has written so much is so seldom tiresome. In his books there are scarcely any of those passages which, in our school-days, we used to call *skip*. Yet he often wrote on subjects which are generally considered as dull, on subjects which men of great talents have in vain endeavoured to render popular. When we compare the Historic Doubts about Richard the Third with Whitaker's and Chalmers's books on a far more interesting question, the character of Mary Queen of Scots; when we compare the Anecdotes of Painting with the works of Anthony Wood,[1] of Nichols,[2] of Granger,[3] we at once see Walpole's superiority, not in industry, not in learning, not in accuracy, not in logical power, but in the art of writing what people will like to read. He rejects all but the attractive parts of his subject. He keeps only what is in itself amusing or what can be made so by the artifice of his diction. The coarser morsels of antiquarian learning he abandons to others, and sets out an entertainment worthy of a Roman epicure, an entertainment consisting of nothing but delicacies, the brains of singing birds, the roe of mullets, the sunny halves of peaches. This, we think, is the great merit of his romance.[4] There is little skill in the delineation of the characters. Manfred is as commonplace a tyrant, Jerome as commonplace a confessor, Theodore as commonplace a young gentleman, Isabella and Matilda as commonplace a pair of young ladies, as are to be found in any of the thousand Italian castles in which *condottieri* have revelled or in which imprisoned duchesses have pined. We cannot say that we much admire the big man whose sword is dug up in one quarter of the globe, whose helmet drops from the clouds in another, and who, after clattering and rustling for some days, ends by kicking the house down. But the story, whatever its value may be, never flags for a single moment. There are no digressions, or unseasonable descriptions, or long speeches. Every sentence carries the action forward. The excitement is constantly renewed. Absurd as is the machinery,

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tions. It is the picture of English politics and social life at a singularly brilliant period, drawn by an extremely clever, audacious and outspoken man of the world, which continues to hold the attention of all who love either literature or history.

[1] Anthony Wood's *Athenæ Oxonienses*, an exact history of all the writers and bishops who have had their education in Oxford, was published in 1691-1692.

[2] John Nichols, 1745-1826, published in 1781 his *Biographical Anecdotes of Mr. Hogarth*, and in 1812-1815 his *Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century.*

[3] James Granger, 1723-1776, published in 1769 his *Biographical History of England, Intended as an Essay towards Reducing our Biography to System and a Help to the Knowledge of Portraits.*

[4] *The Castle of Otranto.*

insipid as are the human actors, no reader probably ever thought the book dull.

Walpole's Letters are generally considered as his best performances, and, we think, with reason. His faults are far less offensive to us in his correspondence than in his books. His wild, absurd, and ever-changing opinions about men and things are easily pardoned in familiar letters. His bitter, scoffing, depreciating disposition does not show itself in so unmitigated a manner as in his Memoirs. A writer of letters must in general be civil and friendly to his correspondent at least, if to no other person.

He loved letter-writing, and had evidently studied it as an art. It was, in truth, the very kind of writing for such a man, for a man very ambitious to rank among wits, yet nervously afraid that, while obtaining the reputation of a wit, he might lose caste as a gentleman. There was nothing vulgar in writing a letter. Not even Ensign Northerton,[1] not even the Captain described in Hamilton's Bawn,[2]—and Walpole, though the author of many quartos, had some feelings in common with those gallant officers,—would have denied that a gentleman might sometimes correspond with a friend. Whether Walpole bestowed much labour on the composition of his letters, it is impossible to judge from internal evidence. There are passages which seem perfectly unstudied. But the appearance of ease may be the effect of labour. There are passages which have a very artificial air. But they may have been produced without effort by a mind of which the natural ingenuity had been improved into morbid quickness by constant exercise. We are never sure that we see him as he was. We are never sure that what appears to be nature is not disguised art. We are never sure that what appears to be art is not merely habit which has become second nature.

In wit and animation the present collection is not superior to those which have preceded it. But it has one great advantage over them all. It forms a connected whole, a regular journal of what appeared to Walpole the most important transactions of the last twenty years of George the Second's reign. It furnishes much new information concerning the history of that time, the portion of English history of which common readers know the least.

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[1] Ensign Northerton is the illiterate and brutal officer in Fielding's *Tom Jones.*

[2] In Swift's poem of "Hamilton's Bawn," the captain is made to say:—

"Your Noveds and Omurs and Bluturks and stuff
By G— they don't signify this pinch of snuff.
To give a young gentleman right education,
The army's the only good school in the nation.
My schoolmaster called me a dunce and a fool,
But at cuffs I was always the cock of the school," etc.

The earlier letters contain the most lively and interesting account which we possess of that "great Walpolean battle," to use the words of Junius,[1] which terminated in the retirement of Sir Robert. Horace entered the House of Commons just in time to witness the last desperate struggle which his father, surrounded by enemies and traitors, maintained, with a spirit as brave as that of the column of Fontenoy,[2] first for victory, and then for honourable retreat. Horace was, of course, on the side of his family. Lord Dover seems to have been enthusiastic on the same side, and goes so far as to call Sir Robert "the glory of the Whigs."

Sir Robert deserved this high eulogium, we think, as little as he deserved the abusive epithets which have often been coupled with his name. A fair character of him still remains to be drawn; and, whenever it shall be drawn, it will be equally unlike the portrait by Coxe and the portrait by Smollett.[3]

He had, undoubtedly, great talents and great virtues. He was not, indeed, like the leaders of the party which opposed his government, a brilliant orator. He was not a profound scholar, like Carteret, or a wit and a fine gentleman, like Chesterfield. In all these respects his deficiencies were remarkable. His literature consisted of a scrap or two of Horace and an anecdote or two from the end of the Dictionary. His knowledge of history was so limited that, in the great debate on the Excise Bill, he was forced to ask Attorney-General Yorke who Empson and Dudley were. His manners were a little too coarse and boisterous even for that age of Westerns and Topehalls.[4] When he ceased to talk of politics, he could talk of nothing but women; and he dilated on his favourite theme with a freedom which shocked even that plain-spoken generation, and which was quite unsuited to his age and station. The noisy revelry of his summer festivities at Houghton gave much scandal to grave people, and annually drove his kinsman and colleague, Lord Townshend, from the neighbouring mansion of Rainham.

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[1] "I remember the great Walpolean battles" (*Miscellaneous Letters Ascribed to Junius*, No. 57).

[2] At the battle of Fontenoy fought on the 11th of May, 1745, a column of 10,000 British and Hanoverian infantry, ill supported by their Dutch and Austrian comrades, advancing over difficult ground and under heavy fire, reached and broke the centre of the French line and all but gained the victory over superior forces.

[3] By Archdeacon Coxe in his *Memoirs of Sir Robert Walpole*. By Smollett in his *History of England*.

[4] Topehall is a drunken, fox-hunting squire in Smollett's *Roderick Random*.

But, however ignorant Walpole might be of general history and of general literature, he was better acquainted than any man of his day with what it concerned him most to know, mankind, the English nation, the Court, the House of Commons, and the Treasury. Of foreign affairs he knew little; but his judgment was so good that his little knowledge went very far. He was an excellent parliamentary debater, an excellent parliamentary tactician, an excellent man of business. No man ever brought more industry or more method to the transacting of affairs. No minister in his time did so much; yet no minister had so much leisure.

He was a good-natured man who had during thirty years seen nothing but the worst parts of human nature in other men. He was familiar with the malice of kind people, and the perfidy of honourable people. Proud men had licked the dust before him. Patriots had begged him to come up to the price of their puffed and advertised integrity. He said after his fall that it was a dangerous thing to be a minister, that there were few minds which would not be injured by the constant spectacle of meanness and depravity. To his honour it must be confessed that few minds have come out of such a trial so little damaged in the most important parts. He retired, after more than twenty years of supreme power, with a temper not soured, with a heart not hardened, with simple tastes, with frank manners, and with a capacity for friendship. No stain of treachery, of ingratitude, or of cruelty rests on his memory. Factious hatred, while flinging on his name every other foul aspersion, was compelled to own that he was not a man of blood. This would scarcely seem a high eulogium on a statesman of our times. It was then a rare and honourable distinction. The contests of parties in England had long been carried on with a ferocity unworthy of a civilised people. Sir Robert Walpole was the minister who gave to our Government that character of lenity which it has since generally preserved. It was perfectly known to him that many of his opponents had dealings with the Pretender. The lives of some were at his mercy. He wanted neither Whig nor Tory precedents for using his advantage unsparingly. But with a clemency to which posterity has never done justice, he suffered himself to be thwarted, vilified, and at last overthrown, by a party which included many men whose necks were in his power.

That he practised corruption on a large scale, is, we think, indisputable. But whether he deserves all the invectives which have been uttered against him on that account may be questioned. No man ought to be severely censured for not being beyond his age in virtue. To buy the votes of constituents is as immoral as to buy the votes of representatives. The candidate who gives five guineas to the freeman is as culpable as the man who gives three hundred guineas to the member. Yet we know that, in our own time, no man is thought wicked or dishonourable, no man is cut, no man is black-balled, because, under the old system of election, he was returned in the only way in which he could be returned, for East Retford, for Liverpool, or for Stafford.[1] Walpole governed by corruption, because, in his time, it was impossible to govern otherwise. Corruption was unnecessary to the Tudors, for their Parliaments were feeble. The publicity which has of late years been given to parliamentary proceedings has raised the standard of morality among public men. The power of public opinion is so great that, even before the reform of the representation, a faint suspicion that a minister had given pecuniary gratifications to Members of Parliament in return for their votes would have been enough to ruin him. But, during the century which followed the Restoration, the House of Commons was in that situation in which assemblies must be managed by corruption, or cannot be managed at all. It was not held in awe, as in the sixteenth century, by the throne. It was not held in awe, as in the nineteenth century, by the opinion of the people. Its constitution was oligarchical. Its deliberations were secret. Its power in the State was immense. The Government had every conceivable motive to offer bribes. Many of the members, if they were not men of strict honour and probity, had no conceivable motive to refuse what the Government offered. In the reign of Charles the Second, accordingly, the practice of buying votes in the House of Commons was commenced by the daring Clifford, and carried to a great extent by the crafty and shameless Danby.[1] The Revolution, great and manifold as were the blessings of which it was directly or remotely the cause, at first aggravated this evil. The importance of the House of Commons was now greater than ever. The prerogatives of the Crown were more strictly limited than ever; and those associations in which, more than in its legal prerogatives, its power had consisted, were completely broken. No prince was ever in so helpless and distressing a situation as William the Third. The party which defended his title was, on general grounds, disposed to curtail his prerogative. The party which was, on general grounds, friendly to prerogative, was adverse to his title. There was no quarter in which both his office and his person could find favour. But while the influence of the House of Commons in the Government was becoming paramount, the influence of the people over the House of Commons was declining. It mattered little in the time of Charles the First whether that House were or were not chosen by the people; it was certain to act for the people, because it would have been at the mercy of the Court but for the support of the people. Now that the Court was at the mercy of the House of Commons, those members who were not returned by popular election had nobody to please but themselves. Even those who were returned by popular election did not live, as now, under a constant sense of responsibility. The constituents were not, as now, daily apprised of the votes and speeches of their representatives. The privileges which had in old times been indispensably necessary to the security and efficiency of Parliaments were now superfluous. But they were still carefully maintained, by honest legislators from superstitious veneration, by dishonest legislators for their own selfish ends. They had been an useful defence to the Commons during a long and doubtful conflict with powerful sovereigns. They were now no longer necessary for that purpose; and they became a defence to the members against their constituents. That secrecy which had been absolutely necessary in times when the Privy Council was in the habit of sending the leaders of Opposition to the Tower was preserved in times when a vote of the House of Commons was sufficient to hurl the most powerful minister from his post.

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[1] East Retford was a petty borough in Nottingham, where the whole constituency amounted to little more than a hundred voters, infamous for corruption. In 1828 a bill was brought in to transfer the franchise of East Retford to Birmingham, but the town was not disfranchised until the first Reform Act. In Liverpool the franchise was enjoyed by the mayor, bailiffs and freemen numbering between two and three thousand. Oldfield (*History of the Boroughs of Great Britain*) wrote: "This great commercial town is entirely free both from aristocratical and ministerial influence," but its reputation for purity was not equally high. In Stafford the mayor, aldermen and burgesses, about four hundred in all, possessed the franchise and had no good reputation.

The Government could not go on unless the Parliament could be kept in order. And how was the Parliament to be kept in order? Three hundred years ago it would have been enough for a statesman to have the support of the Crown. It would now, we hope and believe, be enough for him to enjoy the confidence and approbation of the great body of the middle class. A hundred years ago it would not have been enough to have both Crown and people on his side. The Parliament had shaken off the control of the Royal prerogative. It had not yet fallen under the control of public opinion. A large proportion of the members had absolutely no motive to support any administration except their own interest, in the lowest sense of the word. Under these circumstances, the country could be governed only by corruption. Bolingbroke, who was the ablest and the most vehement of those who raised the clamour against corruption, had no better remedy to propose than that the Royal prerogative should be strengthened.[1] The remedy would no doubt have been efficient. The only question is, whether it would not have been worse than the disease. The fault was in the constitution of the Legislature; and to blame those ministers who managed the Legislature in the only way in which it could be managed is gross injustice. They submitted to extortion because they could not help themselves. We might as well accuse the poor Lowland farmers who paid black mail to Rob Roy of corrupting the virtue of the Highlanders, as accuse Sir Robert Walpole of corrupting the virtue of Parliament. His crime was merely this, that he employed his money more dexterously, and got more support in return for it, than any of those who preceded or followed him.

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[1] For Clifford and Danby see essay on Sir William Temple, vol. ii., pp. 266 and 284.

He was himself incorruptible by money. His dominant passion was the love of power: and the heaviest charge which can be brought against him is that to this passion he never scrupled to sacrifice the interests of his country.

One of the maxims which, as his son tells us, he was most in the habit of repeating, was *quieta non movere*.[2] It was indeed the maxim by which he generally regulated his public conduct. It is the maxim of a man more solicitous to hold power long than to use it well. It is remarkable that, though he was at the head of affairs during more than twenty years, not one great measure, not one important change for the better or for the worse in any part of our institutions, marks the period of his supremacy. Nor was this because he did not clearly see that many changes were very desirable. He had been brought up in the school of toleration, at the feet of Somers and of Burnet. He disliked the shameful laws against Dissenters. But he never could be induced to bring forward a proposition for repealing them. The sufferers represented to him the injustice with which they were treated, boasted of their firm attachment to the House of Brunswick and to the Whig party, and reminded him of his own repeated declarations of good will to their cause. He listened, assented, promised, and did nothing. At length, the question was brought forward by others, and the Minister, after a hesitating and evasive speech, voted against it.[1] The truth was that he remembered to the latest day of his life that terrible explosion of high-church feeling which the foolish prosecution of a foolish parson had occasioned in the days of Queen Anne.[2] If the Dissenters had been turbulent he would probably have relieved them; but while he apprehended no danger from them, he would not run the slightest risk for their sake. He acted in the same manner with respect to other questions. He knew the state of the Scotch Highlands. He was constantly predicting another insurrection in that part of the empire. Yet, during his long tenure of power, he never attempted to perform what was then the most obvious and pressing duty of a British Statesman, to break the power of the Chiefs, and to establish the authority of law through the furthest corners of the Island. Nobody knew better than he that, if this were not done, great mischiefs would follow. But the Highlands were tolerably quiet in his time. He was content to meet daily emergencies by daily expedients; and he left the rest to his successors. They had to conquer the Highlands in the midst of a war with France and Spain, because he had not regulated the Highlands in a time of profound peace.

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[1] The remedy for corruption proposed by Bolingbroke in his *Patriot King* and in other writings was that the sovereign should resume the control of the Government and select as ministers the best and ablest men, wherever he could find them, without regard to party. The ministers were to become once more the servants of the Crown, although, of course, accountable to Parliament.

[2] "Never was my father's *Quieta non movere* established into a maxim that ought to be a lesson to politicians so much as by the American war" (Walpole to Mann, 27th September, 1783).

Sometimes, in spite of all his caution, he found that measures which he had hoped to carry through quietly had caused great agitation. When this was the case he generally modified or withdrew them. It was thus that he cancelled Wood's patent in compliance with the absurd outcry of the Irish.[3] It was thus that he frittered away the Porteous Bill to nothing, for fear of exasperating the Scotch.[1] It was thus that he abandoned the Excise Bill, as soon as he found that it was offensive to all the great towns of England.[2] The language which he held about that measure in a subsequent session is strikingly characteristic. Pulteney had insinuated that the scheme would be again brought forward. "As to the wicked scheme," said Walpole, "as the gentleman is pleased to call it, which he would persuade gentlemen is not yet laid aside, I for my part assure this House I am not so mad as ever again to engage in any thing that looks like an Excise; though, in my private opinion, I still think it was a scheme that would have tended very much to the interest of the nation."

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[1] In March, 1736 (see Coxe, *Memoirs*, i., 475). According to Tindal Sir Robert expressed himself so cautiously with regard to the Church and so affectionately with regard to the dissenters that neither party had cause to complain of him.

[2] The impeachment of Dr. Sacheverell in 1710.

[3] In 1722 William Wood, an ironmaster, obtained a licence to coin half-pence and farthings for Ireland for the next fourteen years. The transaction was really open to blame in several respects, and was impugned with such effect by Swift in the

The conduct of Walpole with regard to the Spanish war is the great blemish of his public life. Archdeacon Coxe imagined that he had discovered one grand principle of action to which the whole public conduct of his hero ought to be referred. "Did the administration of Walpole," says the biographer, "present any uniform principle which may be traced in every part, and which gave combination and consistency to the whole? Yes, and that principle was, THE LOVE OF PEACE."[3] It would be difficult, we think, to bestow a higher eulogium on any statesman. But the eulogium is far too high for the merits of Walpole. The great ruling principle of his public conduct was indeed a love of peace, but not in the sense in which Archdeacon Coxe uses the phrase. The peace which Walpole sought was not the peace of the country, but the peace of his own administration.

Drapier's Letters that the Government gave way, and induced Wood to surrender his patent in return for a pension (see Lecky, *History of Ireland*, ch. ii.).

[1] John Porteous, Captain of the Edinburgh City Guard, was hanged by the mob in 1736 in revenge for having ordered his men to fire on the crowd at the execution of a smuggler named Andrew Wilson. As nobody was convicted for the offence, the Government brought in a bill to punish the city; but the bill was rendered futile by amendments made in the House of Commons. The murder of Porteous forms an incident in Scott's *Heart of Midlothian.*

[2] By the Excise Bill, which he introduced in 1733, Walpole proposed to substitute, for the customs levied on a number of imports, an excise duty on consumption, thus rendering the kingdom one great free port for the commerce of the world; but the Opposition, by representing the bill as a device of tyranny, raised such a storm that it was withdrawn (see Coxe, i., 409).

[3] Coxe, i., 744. Walpole's political inactivity has been justified by several writers, especially by Mr. Morley in his *Life of Walpole*, on the ground that it was essential to give the nation rest after so long a period of civil disturbance and foreign war, to convince the clergy and the landed interest that they were safe under the House of Hanover, and to avoid irritating the Scotch who still hankered after the Stuarts and were not well satisfied with the Union. Whether the justification is complete it would need more space to examine than a note affords.

During the greater part of his public life, indeed, the two objects were inseparably connected. At length he was reduced to the necessity of choosing between them, of plunging the State into hostilities for which there was no just ground, and by which nothing was to be got, or of facing a violent opposition in the country, in Parliament, and even in the royal closet. No person was more thoroughly convinced than he of the absurdity of the cry against Spain. But his darling power was at stake, and his choice was soon made. He preferred an unjust war to a stormy session.[1] It is impossible to say of a Minister who acted thus that the love of peace was the one grand principle to which all his conduct is to be referred. The governing principle of his conduct was neither love of peace nor love of war, but love of power.

The praise to which he is fairly entitled is this, that he understood the true interest of his country better than any of his contemporaries, and that he pursued that interest whenever it was not incompatible with the interest of his own intense and grasping ambition. It was only in matters of public moment that he shrank from agitation and had recourse to compromise. In his contests for personal influence there was no timidity, no flinching. He would have all or none. Every member of the Government who would not submit to his ascendency was turned out or forced to resign. Liberal of every thing else, he was avaricious of power. Cautious every where else, when power was at stake he had all the boldness of Richelieu or Chatham. He might easily have secured his authority if he could have been induced to divide it with others. But he would not part with one fragment of it to purchase defenders for all the rest. The effect of this policy was that he had able enemies and feeble allies. His most distinguished coadjutors left him one by one, and joined the ranks of the Opposition. He faced the increasing array of his enemies with unbroken spirit, and thought it far better that they should attack his power than that they should share it.

The Opposition was in every sense formidable. At its head were two royal personages, the exiled head of the House of Stuart, the disgraced heir of the House of Brunswick. One set of members received directions from Avignon. Another set held their consultations and banquets at Norfolk House. The majority of the landed gentry, the majority of the parochial clergy, one of the universities, and a strong party in the City of London and in the other great towns, were decidedly adverse to the Government. Of the men of letters, some were exasperated by the neglect with which the Minister treated them, a neglect which was the more remarkable, because his predecessors, both Whig and Tory, had paid court with emulous munificence to the wits and the poets; others were honestly inflamed by party zeal; almost all lent their aid to the Opposition. In truth, all that was alluring to ardent and imaginative minds was on that side; old associations, new visions of political improvement, high-flown theories of loyalty, high-flown theories of liberty, the enthusiasm of the Cavalier, the enthusiasm of the Roundhead. The Tory gentleman, fed in the common-rooms of Oxford with the doctrines of Filmer[1] and Sacheverell, and proud of the exploits of his greatgrandfather, who had charged with Rupert at Marston, who had held out the old manor-house against Fairfax, and who, after the King's return, had been set down for a Knight of the Royal Oak,[2] flew to that section of the Opposition which, under pretence of assailing the existing administration, was in truth assailing the reigning dynasty. The young republican, fresh from his Livy and his Lucan, and glowing with admiration of Hampden, of Russell, and of Sydney, hastened with equal eagerness to those benches from which eloquent voices thundered nightly against the tyranny and perfidy of courts. So many young politicians were caught by these declamations that Sir Robert, in one of his best speeches, observed that the Opposition consisted of three bodies, the Tories, the discontented Whigs, who were known by the name of the Patriots, and the Boys. In fact almost every young man of warm temper and lively imagination, whatever his political bias might be, was drawn into the party adverse to the Government; and some of the most distinguished among them, Pitt, for example, among public men, and Johnson, among men of letters, afterwards openly acknowledged their mistake.

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[1] Something may be said in justification or extenuation of the Spanish war (see essay on Pitt, vol. ii., p. 22). But Walpole, who disapproved of the war, must in any case be blamed for consenting to it.

The aspect of the Opposition, even while it was still a minority in the House of Commons, was very imposing. Among those who, in Parliament or out of Parliament, assailed the administration of Walpole, were Bolingbroke, Carteret, Chesterfield, Argyle, Pulteney, Wyndham, Doddington, Pitt, Lyttelton, Barnard, Pope, Swift, Gay, Arbuthnot, Fielding, Johnson, Thomson, Akenside, Glover.

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[1] Robert Filmer, Sir, d. 1653, author of *Patriarcha*, a justification of absolute monarchy as based on hereditary right derived from Adam. This work, which was not published until 1680, when a Royalist reaction was setting in after the Popish Plot, found so much favour that Locke undertook to refute it, which he did in his first *Treatise of Government*.

[2] After the Restoration it was proposed to found an Order of Knights of the Royal Oak (in allusion to the adventure of Charles in his flight from Worcester) as a means of conferring honour on persons who had signalised their loyalty to the Crown. The project was never carried out.

The circumstance that the Opposition was divided into two parties, diametrically opposed to each other in political opinions, was long the safety of Walpole. It was at last his ruin. The leaders of the minority knew that it would be difficult for them to bring forward any important measure without producing an immediate schism in their party. It was with very great difficulty that the Whigs in opposition had been induced to give a sullen and silent vote for the repeal of the Septennial Act. The Tories, on the other hand, could not be induced to support Pulteney's motion for an addition to the income of Prince Frederic. The two parties had cordially joined in calling out for a war with Spain; but they now had their war. Hatred of Walpole was almost the only feeling which was common to them. On this one point, therefore, they concentrated their whole strength. With gross ignorance, or gross dishonesty, they represented the Minister as the main grievance of the State. His dismissal, his punishment, would prove the certain cure for all the evils which the nation suffered. What was to be done after his fall, how misgovernment was to be prevented in future, were questions to which there were as many answers as there were noisy and ill-informed members of the Opposition. The only cry in which all could join was, "Down with Walpole!" So much did they narrow the disputed ground, so purely personal did they make the question, that they threw out friendly hints to the other members of the Administration, and declared that they refused quarter to the Prime Minister alone. His tools might keep their heads, their fortunes, even their places, if only the great father of corruption were given up to the just vengeance of the nation.

If the fate of Walpole's colleagues had been inseparably bound up with his, he probably would, even after the unfavourable elections of 1741, have been able to weather the storm. But as soon as it was understood that the attack was directed against him alone, and that, if he were sacrificed, his associates might expect advantageous and honourable terms, the ministerial ranks began to waver, and the murmur of *sauve qui peut* was heard.[1] That

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[1] It must be remembered that Cabinet Government was still in its infancy, and the feeling of loyalty between members of a cabinet still undeveloped. For a

Walpole had foul play is almost certain, but to what extent it is difficult to say. Lord Islay[1] was suspected; the Duke of Newcastle something more than suspected.[2] It would have been strange, indeed, if his Grace had been idle when treason was hatching.

> "Ch' i' ho de' traditor' sempre sospetto,
> E Gan fu traditor prima che nato."[3]

"His name," said Sir Robert, "is perfidy."

Never was a battle more manfully fought out than the last struggle of the old statesman. His clear judgment, his long experience, and his fearless spirit, enabled him to maintain a defensive war through half the session. To the last his heart never failed him; and, when at last he yielded, he yielded not to the threats of his enemies, but to the entreaties of his dispirited and refractory followers. When he could no longer retain his power, he compounded for honour and security, and retired to his garden and his paintings, leaving to those who had overthrown him shame, discord, and ruin.

Every thing was in confusion. It has been said that the confusion was produced by the dexterous policy of Walpole; and, undoubtedly, he did his best to sow dissension amongst his triumphant enemies. But there was little for him to do. Victory had completely dissolved the hollow truce, which the two sections of the Opposition had but imperfectly observed, even while the event of the contest was still doubtful. A thousand questions were opened in a moment. A thousand conflicting claims were preferred. It was impossible to follow any line of policy which would not have been offensive to a large portion of the successful party. It was impossible to find places for a tenth part of those who thought that they had a right to office. While the parlia-

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minister to separate his lot from his colleagues did not then seem an offence against honour, if he did it openly.

[1] Archibald Campbell, 1682-1761, brother of John, second Duke of Argyll, who fills so large a space in Scott's *Heart of Midlothian*. The duke went into Opposition in 1740; but Lord Islay being on the worst terms with him continued to follow Sir Robert. Lord Hervey has left a piquant character of Lord Islay. "Lord Isla was the man on whom Sir Robert Walpole depended entirely for the management of all Scotch affairs; a man of parts, quickness, knowledge, temper, dexterity and judgment—a man of little truth, little honour, little principle and no attachment but to his interest. A pedantic, dirty, shrewd, unbred fellow of a college with a mean aspect, bred to the sophistry of the civil law and made a peer, would have been just such a man" (Lord Hervey, *Memoirs*, ch. xiv.). Upon his brother's death, in 1743, Lord Islay succeeded to the dukedom.

[2] See essay on Pitt, vol. ii., pp. 22, 23.

[3] "I always suspect traitors, and Gan was a traitor before he was born" (Pulci, *Morgante Maggiore*, canto iii.).

mentary leaders were preaching patience and confidence, while their followers were clamouring for reward, a still louder voice was heard from without, the terrible cry of a people angry, they hardly knew with whom, and impatient they hardly knew for what. The day of retribution had arrived. The Opposition reaped that which they had sown. Inflamed with hatred and cupidity, despairing of success by any ordinary mode of political warfare, and blind to consequences, which, though remote, were certain, they had conjured up a devil whom they could not lay. They had made the public mind drunk with calumny and declamation. They had raised expectations which it was impossible to satisfy. The downfall of Walpole was to be the beginning of a political millennium; and every enthusiast had figured to himself that millennium according to the fashion of his own wishes. The republican expected that the power of the Crown would be reduced to a mere shadow, the high Tory that the Stuarts would be restored, the moderate Tory that the golden days which the Church and the landed interest had enjoyed during the last years of Queen Anne would immediately return. It would have been impossible to satisfy every body. The conquerors satisfied nobody.

We have no reverence for the memory of those who were then called the patriots. We are for the principles of good government against Walpole, and for Walpole against the Opposition. It was most desirable that a purer system should be introduced; but, if the old system was to be retained, no man was so fit as Walpole to be at the head of affairs. There were grievous abuses in the government, abuses more than sufficient to justify a strong opposition. But the party opposed to Walpole, while they stimulated the popular fury to the highest point, were at no pains to direct it aright. Indeed they studiously misdirected it. They misrepresented the evil. They prescribed inefficient and pernicious remedies. They held up a single man as the sole cause of all the vices of a bad system which had been in full operation before his entrance into public life, and which continued to be in full operation when some of these very brawlers had succeeded to his power. They thwarted his best measures. They drove him into an unjustifiable war against his will. Constantly talking in magnificent language about tyranny, corruption, wicked ministers, servile courtiers, the liberty of Englishmen, the Great Charter, the rights for which our fathers bled, Timoleon, Brutus, Hampden, Sydney, they had absolutely nothing to propose which would have been an improvement on our institutions. Instead of directing the public mind to definite reforms which might have completed the work of the revolution, which might have brought the legislature into harmony with the nation, and which might have prevented the Crown from doing by influence what it could no longer do by prerogative, they excited a vague craving for change, by which they profited for a single moment, and of which, as they well deserved, they were soon the victims.

Among the reforms which the State then required, there were two of paramount importance, two which would alone have remedied almost every gross abuse, and without which all other remedies would have been unavailing, the publicity of parliamentary proceedings, and the abolition of the rotten boroughs. Neither of these was thought of. It seems to us clear that, if these were not adopted, all other measures would have been illusory. Some of the patriots suggested changes which would, beyond all doubt, have increased the existing evils a hundredfold. These men wished to transfer the disposal of employments and the command of the army from the Crown to the Parliament; and this on the very ground that the Parliament had long been a grossly corrupt body. The security against malpractices was to be that the members, instead of having a portion of the public plunder doled out to them by a minister, were to help themselves.

The other schemes of which the public mind was full were less dangerous than this. Some of them were in themselves harmless. But none of them would have done much good, and most of them were extravagantly absurd. What they were we may learn from the instructions which many constituent bodies, immediately after the change of administration, sent up to their representatives. A more deplorable collection of follies can hardly be imagined. There is, in the first place, a general cry for Walpole's head. Then there are bitter complaints of the decay of trade, a decay which, in the judgment of these enlightened politicians, was brought about by Walpole and corruption. They would have been nearer to the truth if they had attributed their sufferings to the war into which they had driven Walpole against his better judgment. He had foretold the effects of his unwilling concession. On the day when hostilities against Spain were proclaimed, when the heralds were attended into the city by the chiefs of the Opposition, when the Prince of Wales himself stopped at Temple-Bar to drink success to the English arms, the Minister heard all the steeples of the city jingling with a merry peal, and muttered, "They may ring the bells now; they will be wringing their hands before long."[1]

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[1] Coxe, vol. i., p. 618.

Another grievance, for which of course Walpole and corruption were answerable, was the great exportation of English wool. In the judgment of the sagacious electors of several large towns, the remedying of this evil was a matter second only in importance to the hanging of Sir Robert. There were also earnest injunctions that the members should vote against standing armies in time of peace, injunctions which were, to say the least, ridiculously unseasonable in the midst of a war which was likely to last, and which did actually last, as long as the Parliament.[1] The repeal of the Septennial Act, as was to be expected, was strongly pressed. Nothing was more natural than that the voters should wish for a triennial recurrence of their bribes and their ale. We feel firmly convinced that the repeal of the Septennial Act, unaccompanied by a complete reform of the constitution of the elective body, would have been an unmixed curse to the country. The only rational recommendation which we can find in all these instructions is that the number of placemen in Parliament should be limited, and that pensioners should not be allowed to sit there. It is plain, however, that this cure was far from going to the root of the evil, and that, if it had been adopted without other reforms, secret bribery would probably have been more practised than ever.

We will give one more instance of the absurd expectations which the declamations of the Opposition had raised in the country. Akenside[2] was one of the fiercest and most uncompromising of the young patriots out of Parliament. When he found that the change of administration had produced no change of system, he gave vent to his indignation in the "Epistle to Curio," the best poem that he ever wrote, a poem, indeed, which seems to indicate, that, if he had left lyric composition to Gray and Collins, and had employed his powers in grave and elevated satire, he might have disputed the pre-eminence of Dryden. But whatever be the literary merits of the epistle, we can say nothing in praise of the political doctrines which it inculcates. The poet, in a rapturous apostrophe to the spirits of the great men of antiquity, tells us what he expected from Pulteney at the moment of the fall of the tyrant.

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[1] It must be remembered that a standing army had from the first been regarded by both Whigs and Tories as a likely instrument of despotism; that for this reason Parliament refused to sanction its existence for more than a year at a time, and that men long looked forward to a time of stable peace when it might be suppressed.

[2] Mark Akenside, 1721-1770, now almost entirely forgotten, gained a high poetical reputation by his *Pleasures of Imagination* published in 1744. His style was rhetorical and his manner pompous; and the pedantic physician in Smollett's *Peregrine Pickle* is said to have been intended as a caricature of Akenside.

"See private life by wisest arts reclaimed,
See ardent youth to noblest manners framed,
See us achieve whate'er was sought by you,
If Curio—only Curio—will be true."

It was Pulteney's business, it seems, to abolish faro and masquerades, to stint the young Duke of Marlborough to a bottle of brandy a day, and to prevail on Lady Vane[1] to be content with three lovers at a time.

Whatever the people wanted, they certainly got nothing. Walpole retired in safety; and the multitude were defrauded of the expected show on Tower Hill. The Septennial Act was not repealed. The placemen were not turned out of the House of Commons. Wool, we believe, was still exported. "Private life" afforded as much scandal as if the reign of Walpole and corruption had continued; and "ardent youth" fought with watchmen and betted with blacklegs as much as ever.

The colleagues of Walpole had, after his retreat, admitted some of the chiefs of the Opposition into the Government, and soon found themselves compelled to submit to the ascendency of one of their new allies. This was Lord Carteret, afterwards Earl Granville.[2] No public man of that age had greater courage, greater ambition, greater activity, greater talents for debate or for declamation. No public man had such profound and extensive learning. He was familiar with the ancient writers, and loved to sit up till midnight discussing philological and metrical questions with Bentley. His knowledge of modern languages was prodigious. The privy council, when he was present, needed no interpreter. He spoke and wrote French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, German, even Swedish. He had pushed his researches into the most obscure nooks of literature. He was as familiar with

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[1] Frances Anne Hawes, 1713-1788, a beautiful and shameless woman who married in 1732 Lord William Hamilton, a handsome and penniless nobleman. He died in 1734, and she married in 1735 Lord Vane whom she soon came to regard with concentrated loathing and whom she delighted to dishonour and to make ridiculous. Lady Vane was the heroine of "Memoirs of a Lady of Quality" which Smollett by her own desire inserted in *Peregrine Pickle.*

[2] John Carteret, Earl Granville, 1690-1763, entered the House of Lords in 1711, where he vigorously upheld the cause of the Whigs and the House of Brunswick. In 1717 he joined Sunderland's Ministry and went as Ambassador to the court of Sweden and the Congress of Cambrai. In 1721 he became Secretary of State, but in 1724 was politely removed, being sent to Ireland as Lord-Lieutenant. In 1730 he returned to England and became a leader of the Opposition to Walpole. On Walpole's fall in 1742 he was made Secretary of State in Lord Wilmington's Administration, but had to resign in 1744. He tried vainly to form a ministry of his own in 1746. In 1750 he became President of the Council. Thenceforwards he took little part in politics. Lady Sophia Fermor referred to in the text was his second wife. He married her in 1744 and she died in the following year.

Canonists and Schoolmen as with orators and poets. He had read all that the universities of Saxony and Holland had produced on the most intricate questions of public law. Harte,[1] in the preface to the second edition of his History of Gustavus Adolphus, bears a remarkable testimony to the extent and accuracy of Lord Carteret's knowledge. "It was my good fortune or prudence to keep the main body of my army (or in other words my matters of fact safe and entire). The late Earl of Granville was pleased to declare himself of this opinion; especially when he found that I had made Chemnitius one of my principal guides; for his Lordship was apprehensive I might not have seen that valuable and authentic book, which is extremely scarce. I thought myself happy to have contented his Lordship even in the lowest degree: for he understood the German and Swedish histories to the highest perfection."

With all this learning, Carteret was far from being a pedant. His was not one of those cold spirits of which the fire is put out by the fuel. In council, in debate, in society, he was all life and energy. His measures were strong, prompt, and daring, his oratory animated and glowing. His spirits were constantly high. No misfortune, public or private, could depress him. He was at once the most unlucky and the happiest public man of his time.

He had been Secretary of State in Walpole's Administration, and had acquired considerable influence over the mind of George the First. The other ministers could speak no German. The King could speak no English. All the communication that Walpole held with his master was in very bad Latin. Carteret dismayed his colleagues by the volubility with which he addressed his Majesty in German. They listened with envy and terror to the mysterious gutturals which might possibly convey suggestions very little in unison with their wishes.

Walpole was not a man to endure such a colleague as Carteret. The King was induced to give up his favourite. Carteret joined the Opposition, and signalised himself at the head of that party till, after the retirement of his old rival, he again became Secretary of State.

During some months he was chief Minister, indeed sole Minister. He gained the confidence and regard of George the Second. He was at the same time in high favour with the Prince of Wales. As a debater in the House of Lords, he had no equal among his colleagues. Among his opponents, Chesterfield alone could be considered as his match. Confident in his talents, and in the royal favour, he neglected all those means by which the power of Walpole had been created and maintained. His head was full of treaties and expeditions, of schemes for supporting the Queen of Hungary and for humbling the House of Bourbon. He contemptuously abandoned to others all the drudgery, and, with the drudgery, all the fruits of corruption. The patronage of the Church and of the Bar he left to the Pelhams as a trifle unworthy of his care. One of the judges, Chief Justice Willes, if we remember rightly, went to him to beg some ecclesiastical preferment for a friend. Carteret said, that he was too much occupied with continental politics to think about the disposal of places and benefices. "You may rely on it, then," said the Chief Justice, "that people who want places and benefices will go to those who have more leisure." The prediction was accomplished. It would have been a busy time indeed in which the Pelhams had wanted leisure for jobbing; and to the Pelhams the whole cry of place-hunters and pension-hunters resorted. The parliamentary influence of the two brothers became stronger every day, till at length they were at the head of a decided majority in the House of Commons. Their rival, meanwhile, conscious of his powers, sanguine in his hopes, and proud of the storm which he had conjured up on the Continent, would brook neither superior nor equal. "His rants," says Horace Walpole, "are amazing; so are his parts and his spirits."[1] He encountered the opposition of his colleagues, not with the fierce haughtiness of the first Pitt, or the cold unbending arrogance of the second, but with a gay vehemence, a good-humoured imperiousness, that bore every thing down before it. The period of his ascendency was known by the name of the "Drunken Administration;" and the expression was not altogether figurative. His habits were extremely convivial; and champagne probably lent its aid to keep him in that state of joyous excitement in which his life was passed.

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[1] Walter Harte, 1709-1774, a clergyman and a versatile author, who became tutor to Mr. Stanhope, the son of Lord Chesterfield, and is sometimes mentioned in the *Letters*. He published his learned, but ill-digested *History of Gustavus Adolphus* in 1759. Johnson, Arthur Young and Joseph Warton were numbered among his friends.

That a rash and impetuous man of genius like Carteret should not have been able to maintain his ground in Parliament against the crafty and selfish Pelhams is not strange. But it is less easy to understand why he should have been generally unpopular throughout the country. His brilliant talents, his bold and open temper, ought, it should seem, to have made him a favourite with the public. But the people had been bitterly disappointed; and he had to face the first burst of their rage. His close connection with Pulteney, now the most detested man in the nation, was an unfortunate circumstance. He had, indeed, only three partisans, Pulteney, the King, and the Prince of Wales, a most singular assemblage.

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[1] Walpole to Mann, 30th November, 1743.

He was driven from his office. He shortly after made a bold, indeed a desperate, attempt to recover power. The attempt failed. From that time he relinquished all ambitious hopes, and retired laughing to his books and his bottle. No statesman ever enjoyed success with so exquisite a relish, or submitted to defeat with so genuine and unforced a cheerfulness. Ill as he had been used, he did not seem, says Horace Walpole, to have any resentment, or indeed any feeling except thirst.

These letters contain many good stories, some of them no doubt grossly exaggerated, about Lord Carteret; how, in the height of his greatness, he fell in love at first sight on a birthday with Lady Sophia Fermor, the handsome daughter of Lord Pomfret; how he plagued the Cabinet every day with reading to them her ladyship's letters; how strangely he brought home his bride; what fine jewels he gave her; how he fondled her at Ranelagh; and what queen-like state she kept in Arlington Street.[1] Horace Walpole has spoken less bitterly of Carteret than of any public man of that time, Fox, perhaps, excepted; and this is the more remarkable, because Carteret was one of the most inveterate enemies of Sir Robert. In the Memoirs, Horace Walpole, after passing in review all the great men whom England had produced within his memory, concludes by saying, that in genius none of them equalled Lord Granville.[2] Smollett, in Humphrey Clinker, pronounces a similar judgment in coarser language. "Since Granville was turned out, there has been no minister in this nation worth the meal that whitened his periwig."

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[1] Walpole, *Letters*, vol. i., pp. 296-299, 306, 317.

[2] *Memoirs of George the Second*, vol. iii., p. 85. "He (Granville) conceived, knew, expressed whatever he pleased. The state of Europe and the state of literature were equally familiar to him. His eloquence was rapid and flowed from a source of wit, grandeur and knowledge. So far from premeditated, he allowed no reflection to check it. It was entertaining, it was sublime, it was hyperbole, it was ridiculous, according as the profusion of ideas crowded from him" (*ibid.*). The reason for this cordial acknowledgment of Carteret's talents and accomplishments was probably that Carteret had been open in his enmity to Sir Robert. Horace Walpole reserved his bitterest dislike for those who, like the Pelhams and Lord Hardwicke, had been, he thought, plotting to oust Sir Robert whilst they continued his colleagues.

Carteret fell; and the reign of the Pelhams commenced. It was Carteret's misfortune to be raised to power when the public mind was still smarting from recent disappointment. The nation had been duped, and was eager for revenge. A victim was necessary, and on such occasions the victims of popular rage are selected like the victim of Jephthah. The first person who comes in the way is made the sacrifice. The wrath of the people had now spent itself; and the unnatural excitement was succeeded by an unnatural calm. To an irrational eagerness for something new, succeeded an equally irrational disposition to acquiesce in every thing established. A few months back the people had been disposed to impute every crime to men in power, and to lend a ready ear to the high professions of men in opposition. They were now disposed to surrender themselves implicitly to the management of Ministers, and to look with suspicion and contempt on all who pretended to public spirit. The name of patriot had become a by-word of derision. Horace Walpole scarcely exaggerated when he said that, in those times, the most popular declaration which a candidate could make on the hustings was that he had never been and never would be a patriot.[1] At this conjuncture took place the rebellion of the Highland clans. The alarm produced by that event quieted the strife of internal factions. The suppression of the insurrection crushed for ever the spirit of the Jacobite party. Room was made in the Government for a few Tories. Peace was patched up with France and Spain. Death removed the Prince of Wales, who had contrived to keep together a small portion of that formidable opposition of which he had been the leader in the time of Sir Robert Walpole. Almost every man of weight in the House of Commons was officially connected with the Government. The even tenor of the session of Parliament was ruffled only by an occasional harangue from Lord Egmont[2] on the army estimates. For the first time since the accession of the Stuarts there was no opposition. This singular good fortune, denied to the ablest statesmen, to Salisbury,[1] to Strafford, to Clarendon, to Somers, to Walpole, had been reserved for the Pelhams.

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[1] Johnson, although he had been hostile to Sir Robert, in later life defined patriotism as "the last refuge of a scoundrel."

[2] John Perceval, second Earl of Egmont, 1711-1770, an Irish peer who was elected for Westminster in 1741. He joined the Opposition to Walpole and was a friend of the Prince of Wales. He made "a very artful speech" in favour of reducing the strength of the army in 1752 and another in 1753. He remained in Opposition to the Pelhams, but under George III. he was raised to the Upper House as Baron Lovel and Holland of Enmore, and became Paymaster and later First Lord of the Admiralty. He was an able speaker and writer, but prone to crochets.

Henry Pelham,[2] it is true, was by no means a contemptible person. His understanding was that of Walpole on a somewhat smaller scale. Though not a brilliant orator, he was, like his master, a good debater, a good parliamentary tactician, a good man of business. Like his master, he distinguished himself by the neatness and clearness of his financial expositions. Here the resemblance ceased. Their characters were altogether dissimilar. Walpole was good-humoured, but would have his way: his spirits were high, and his manners frank even to coarseness. The temper of Pelham was yielding, but peevish: his habits were regular, and his deportment strictly decorous. Walpole was constitutionally fearless, Pelham constitutionally timid. Walpole had to fear a strong opposition; but no man in the Government durst wag a finger against him. Almost all the opposition which Pelham had to encounter was from members of the Government of which he was the head. His own paymaster spoke against his estimates.[3] His own secretary-at-war spoke against his Regency Bill.[4] In one day Walpole turned Lord Chesterfield, Lord Burlington, and Lord Clinton out of the royal household, dismissed the highest dignitaries of Scotland from their posts, and took away the regiments of the Duke of Bolton and Lord Cobham, because he suspected them of having encouraged the resistance to his Excise Bill. He would far rather have contended with the strongest minority, under the ablest leaders, than have tolerated mutiny in his own party. It would have gone hard with any of his colleagues, who had ventured, on a Government question, to divide the House of Commons against him. Pelham, on the other hand, was disposed to bear any thing rather than drive from office any man round whom a new opposition could form. He therefore endured with fretful patience the insubordination of Pitt and Fox. He thought it far better to connive at their occasional infractions of discipline than to hear them, night after night, thundering againt corruption and wicked ministers from the other side of the House.

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[1] Robert Cecil, second son of the illustrious Lord Burleigh and Treasurer under James I. from 1603 to 1612. It can hardly be said that any Opposition in the modern sense of the term, that is, any permanent and well-organised body hostile to the ministers of the Crown, existed so early as the reign of James I. Nor was either Strafford or Somers a Prime Minister in the later sense of the term.

[2] Henry Pelham, 1695-1754, entered Parliament in 1717 and presently attached himself to Walpole. He became a Lord of the Treasury in 1721 and Secretary at War in 1724, and like his brother, the Duke of Newcastle, contrived to remain in office when Walpole resigned. When Lord Wilmington died in 1743 Pelham became First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer, and with a momentary interruption in 1746 remained head of the Government until his death.

[3] William Pitt who, when the ministry asked the House of Commons to vote 3,000 seamen for the year 1751, said that he should prefer 10,000 (Walpole, *Memoirs of George the Second*, vol. i., p. 12).

[4] Henry Fox. The Regency Bill was introduced by the ministry in 1751 soon after the death of Frederick, Prince of Wales, in order to provide against the contingency of the King's death (he was almost seventy years old) before Prince George (only thirteen years old) should attain his majority. Fox criticised the bill most severely, amongst other reasons because it ignored the claim of his friend, the Duke of Cumberland, to be regent (Walpole, *Memoirs of George the Second*, vol. i., *passim*).

We wonder that Sir Walter Scott never tried his hand on the Duke of Newcastle.[1] An interview between his Grace and Jeanie Deans would have been delightful, and by no means unnatural. There is scarcely any public man in our history of whose manners and conversation so many particulars have been preserved. Single stories may be unfounded or exaggerated. But all the stories about him, whether told by people who were perpetually seeing him in Parliament and attending his levee in Lincoln's Inn Fields, or by Grub Street writers who never had more than a glimpse of his star through the windows of his gilded coach, are of the same character. Horace Walpole and Smollett differed in their tastes and opinions as much as two human beings could differ. They kept quite different society. Walpole played at cards with countesses, and corresponded with ambassadors. Smollett passed his life surrounded by printers' devils and famished scribblers. Yet Walpole's Duke and Smollett's Duke are as like as if they were both from one hand. Smollett's Newcastle runs out of his dressing-room, with his face covered with soap-suds, to embrace the Moorish envoy.[2] Walpole's Newcastle pushes his way into the Duke of Grafton's sick room to kiss the old nobleman's plasters.[3] No man was so unmercifully satirised. But in truth he was himself a satire ready made. All that the art of the satirist does for other men, nature had done for him. Whatever was absurd about him stood out with grotesque prominence from the rest of the character. He was a living, moving, talking caricature. His gait was a shuffling trot; his utterance a rapid stutter; he was always in a hurry; he was never in time; he abounded in fulsome caresses and in hysterical tears. His oratory resembled that of Justice Shallow. It was nonsense effervescent with animal spirits and impertinence. Of his ignorance many anecdotes remain, some well authenticated, some probably invented at coffee-houses, but all exquisitely characteristic. "Oh—yes—yes—to be sure—Annapolis must be defended—troops must be sent to Annapolis—Pray where is Annapolis?"—"Cape Breton an island! wonderful!—show it me in the map. So it is, sure enough. My dear sir, you always bring us good news. I must go and tell the King that Cape Breton is an island."[1]

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[1] Thomas Pelham, 1693-1768, added the name and arms of Holles to his own when he succeeded to the greater part of the estates of his uncle, John Holles, Duke of Newcastle. On his father's death in 1711, he became Baron Pelham, and in 1715 he earned by his zeal against the rebels the title of Duke of Newcastle. Attaching himself first to Townshend, then to Sunderland and finally to Walpole, he became a Secretary of State in 1724 and retained this office through three administrations down to the year 1754, when he succeeded his brother, Henry Pelham, as First Lord of the Treasury. In 1756 he could no longer cope with the dangers threatening the State and made way for the Duke of Devonshire assisted by Pitt. In 1757 he resumed office with Pitt as Secretary of State. He was finally driven out by Lord Bute in 1762. Although he held the Privy Seal in Rockingham's Ministry, he never again enjoyed real power.

[2] Smollett, *Humphrey Clinker*, p. 93 (ed. 1895).

[3] Walpole to Mann, 20th April, 1757.

And this man was, during near thirty years, Secretary of State, and, during near ten years, First Lord of the Treasury! His large fortune, his strong hereditary connection, his great parliamentary interest, will not alone explain this extraordinary fact. His success is a signal instance of what may be effected by a man who devotes his whole heart and soul without reserve to one object. He was eaten up by ambition. His love of influence and authority resembled the avarice of the old usurer in the Fortunes of Nigel. It was so intense a passion that it supplied the place of talents, that it inspired even fatuity with cunning. "Have no money dealings with my father," says Martha to Lord Glenvarloch; "for, dotard as he is, he will make an ass of you."[2] It was as dangerous to have any political connection with Newcastle as to buy and sell with old Trapbois. He was greedy after power with a greediness all his own. He was jealous of all his colleagues, and even of his own brother. Under the disguise of levity he was false beyond all example of political falsehood. All the able men of his time ridiculed him as a dunce, a driveller, a child who never knew his own mind for an hour together; and he overreached them all round.

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[1] Walpole, *Memoirs of George the Second*, vol. i., p. 396; Smollett, *Humphrey Clinker*, p. 93 (ed. 1895). Lord Hervey in various passages of his *Memoirs* confirms the character of the duke given by Walpole and Smollett. "This egregious folly and formal absurdity in a man that had been fifteen years Secretary of State is so incredible that I do not flatter myself that it will be much more natural to conclude I am a great liar than that he could be so great an idiot" (Lord Hervey, *Memoirs*, ch. xxxvii.). At the same time it must be remembered that the personal enmities in a court are of the bitterest kind, that the spirits of the eighteenth century were high and its satire often farcical and that Walpole hated Newcastle as a lukewarm and treacherous colleague of his father.

[2] *Fortunes of Nigel*, ch. xxii.

If the country had remained at peace, it is not impossible that this man would have continued at the head of affairs without admitting any other person to a share of his authority until the throne was filled by a new Prince, who brought with him new maxims of government, new favourites, and a strong will. But the inauspicious commencement of the Seven Years' War brought on a crisis to which Newcastle was altogether unequal. After a calm of fifteen years the spirit of the nation was again stirred to its utmost depths. In a few days the whole aspect of the political world was changed.

But that change is too remarkable an event to be discussed at the end of an article already more than sufficiently long. It is probable that we may, at no remote time, resume the subject.

END OF VOL. I.

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